the weekly Standard

JULY 27, 1998 • $3.50

THE CASE FOR SANCTIONS
ELLIOTT ABRAMS

PROFILES IN CORRUPTION

William J. Clinton and Warren G. Harding, Brothers in Scandal

BY DAVID FRUM

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The Audit Bureau Member

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Big Chief Clinton

Bill Clinton says the darndest things. You never know what will come out of his mouth next. A few years ago, he told a group of farmers that he was "the only president who knew something about agriculture when I got [to the White House]," forgetting, just to begin with, Washington and Jefferson, not to mention a living Democratic ex-president from Plains. And a couple of weeks ago, he came out with another startling piece of news: At a ceremony marking the 200th anniversary of the Marine Band ("The President's Own"), Clinton boasted, "I won prizes in conducting all the way through junior and senior high."

Oh? Were there junior or senior high schools anywhere in America offering prizes for conducting back then (aside from, say, the Curtis Institute of Music)? The president may in fact be a former bemedaled prince of the podium, the Toscanini of the Ozarks, but The Scrapbook is dubious.

Then, at his televised forum on race a few days later, Clinton informed the audience that he was—inevitably, really—part-Cherokee. Some minutes later, an Indian participant complained about the paleface use of "coded" language: "Usually, what they'll do to me is come up and tell me they're Cherokee!" Ouch. Now, Clinton may well have Injun blood coursing through his veins, but, again, one never knows.

Clinton himself seems to be aware of his propensity for telling whoppers—and of the fact that others know about it. A couple of months ago, visiting an exhibition of Mark Rothko's paintings in Washington, the president told reporters that he and Hillary had spent their first date looking at a Rothko exhibition at Yale: "And that's a true story," he added.

As the Little Rock journalist Paul Greenberg says, "Beware the Clinton Clause," which means the telltale phrase whereby Clinton leaves himself the room to wiggle out of a lie. Maybe it's time to proclaim a corollary to the Clinton Clause: Unless he says, "And that's a true story," it probably isn't.

That Judge

Is it just The Scrapbook's imagination, or did President Clinton (echoing his reference to "that woman, Miss Lewinsky") almost trip over his tongue last Friday morning and call Laurence Silberman of the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals "that judge"?

The day before, Silberman had delivered his memorable spanking to the administration for its attempts to invent a "protective function" privilege that would prevent Secret Service agents from testifying to Kenneth Starr's grand jury. Silberman acidly noted that the independent counsel "stands in place of the Attorney General and represents the United States in any proceeding within his or her jurisdiction" and that, therefore, Janet Reno had no "standing," as the lawyers like to say, to represent the Secret Service agents. Nonetheless, "on the first page of the brief [Reno] purports to represent the United States." According to the independent-counsel statute, Silberman went on, it is up to Starr—"the surrogate Attorney General in this matter—to decide whether the 'privilege' asserted by the Secret Service as a government entity should be recognized."

All in all, Silberman delivered himself of a sophisticated sermon on the separation of powers, which because it also included some good soundbites like "constitutional absurdity" seems to have sailed over the heads of quite a few people, including the most famous former professor of constitutional law in America, Bill Clinton, Yale Law, 1973. The next morning Clinton spluttered in his almost-reference to *that judge*: "I mean, that—the judge should—can have a right to his legal opinion about what the Treasury Department and the Justice Department said, but I have told you that this case is about their professional judgment about what's necessary to do their job." A right to his legal opinion? Sounds like he's been watching too much Greta Van Susteren.

Bye-bye, McCurry

Good news for Republicans: The man in the Clinton administration who's zinged them more effectively and relentlessly than even the president himself is leaving.

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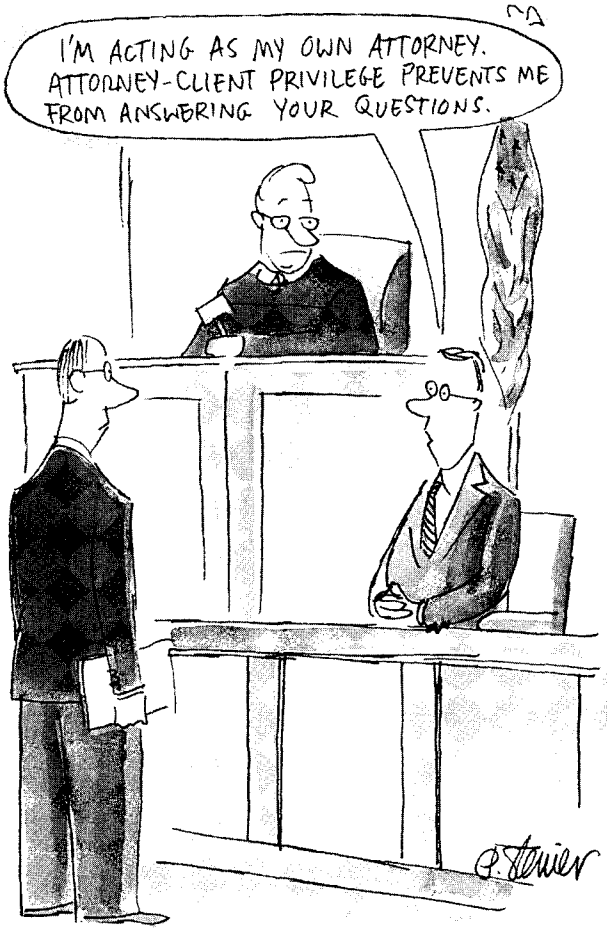
Scrapbook



THE SCRAPBOOK is referring, of course, to White House press secretary Mike McCurry. No firm date yet, but he wants his successor to have at least two years on the job, which means McCurry should be gone by the end of the year. What'll he do? Not become a TV pundit. McCurry wants to set up shop in Washington, give speeches for dough, consult with a corporation or two, teach a college course somewhere, and generally kick back. And who can blame him? It's been a heavy burden defending the republic from Ken Starr. McCurry has expanded the role of press secretary, using the podium in the press room to respond to Republican jibes, take shots of his own, and spin. His truest statement, though, wasn't spin. If Clinton had an innocent explanation for his relationship with Monica Lewinsky, McCurry once noted, we'd have heard it. Indeed.

NEWT GINGRICH, WARMONGER

That sure was an ominous headline in the July 13 *New York Times*: "Gingrich Helped End Panel on the Spread of Nuclear Arms." The article implicitly chastised Gingrich for not allowing a federal commission on nuclear proliferation to be renewed, while downplaying all of the commission's shortcomings.

The real problem wasn't Gingrich, but the White House. The commission was supposed to complete its work in 18 months, but the administration dawdled for 14 months before naming its appointees, highlighting once again the low priority this administration gives to nuclear proliferation. Also problematic was that one of the appointees to the commission, Robert Gallucci, was simultaneously serving as a special U.S. envoy on proliferation, thus compromising his ability to say anything critical of administration policy.

In the end, the real story isn't that a do-nothing commission on weapons proliferation has lapsed, but that the Clinton administration has been recklessly irresponsible in continuing to allow the sale of sensitive products, like high-performance supercomputers, to "allies" like China. These products can contribute to nuclear capabilities, and China has a long record of sharing these products with nuclear states like Pakistan. No commission is going to correct that. Maybe congressional pressure will.

HMOPHOBIA

Of all the issues congressional Democrats will try to exploit for political gain this fall, there's only one that has Republicans worried: health care. Thus it's no coincidence that in the past few weeks GOP leaders in the House and Senate have blessed health-care reform plans. And while these plans are nowhere near as regulatory as Ted Kennedy's, they will still lead to increased regulation of the health-care market.

So what will Republicans do? One clue comes from internal Republican National Committee polling, which was presented to Republican leaders last week. The bad news is that 61 percent of those surveyed said "legislation is needed to protect consumers from being unfairly treated by HMOs." But the good news is that giving patients the right to sue their health plans—a centerpiece of Democrat proposals, and something strongly favored by plaintiffs' attorneys—is cited by just 1 percent of those asked about the reforms they support. Indeed, asked whether they'd rather give patients the right to sue or a 10-day appeals process, the latter option was favored by a 62-31 margin.

Not to say that the process is entirely poll-driven, but don't expect to see intrusive HMO regulation—much less a patient's right to sue—emerge from this Congress.

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Correspondence

Standing to Gain on Capital Gains

You state that Republicans should shy away from pushing a cut in the capital gains tax to 15 percent on the grounds that "it will be hard to convince the electorate that America's capital-holders have not been doing well in recent years" ("Toward November," July 6/July 13).

It's time for The Weekly Standard to shed its late-1980s-style class-warfare mentality and consider the following facts about today's investors: According to a recent Nasdaq survey, 43 percent of Americans own stocks. An NBC/*Wall Street Journal* poll found that 51 percent of Americans own at least $5,000 in stocks, mutual funds, or other retirement saving vehicles. And the American Savings Education Council reports that nearly half of American workers contribute an average of 5 percent of their gross income to 401(k) individual retirement plans. Today's investors are hard-working, middle-class Americans: 49 percent of investors are women, and 38 percent are non-professional salaried workers. Both groups have annual incomes of $75,000 or less. Nearly two-thirds of investor families have incomes under $50,000.

As economist Lawrence Kudlow points out, "Today's investor class could total as many as 125 million people." Small-business owners, non-professional employees, and blue-collar workers with retirement plans *are* America's capital holders. Cutting the capital gains tax would greatly benefit America's middle-class families.

Cesar V. Conda
Legislative Director
Office of Sen. Spencer Abraham
Washington, DC

Not Mixed Up

An article in your magazine stated that I am 87 and living in a nursing home and that, according to a friend of mine, I am "mixed up" (Eric Felten, "CNN and *Time*'s Poisonous Smear," June 29). The implication was that I am both physically and mentally impaired and that this explains my alleged confirmation of the false charges CNN made about Operation Tailwind.

The report by Floyd Abrams has made it clear that I told April Oliver I knew nothing about the use of nerve gas in Operation Tailwind. I never saw any battle plan or after-action reports on the operation. She claimed to have interviewed reliable sources who told her that nerve gas was used, and I told her she should get them on camera and have them say that. She said she had done so. The Abrams report shows that I responded, "But I don't have the information to confirm what they said."

We now know that she didn't have any reliable sources saying that nerve gas was used. This is why she was so persistent in trying to get me to say something they could interpret as confirmation—even though I had made it clear that I could not give her what she was trying to get. Abrams concluded that my interviews did not provide confirmation of the two serious charges made by CNN.

Please let your readers know that I am well and leading a very active life, physically and mentally.

Thomas H. Moorer
Bethesda, MD

Arnett's Supreme Fictions

Now that Peter Arnett's unscrupulous manipulation of facts regarding Operation Tailwind has been exposed and he has been reprimanded, Arnett should be called to account for another "loosely sourced" Vietnam war story of his.

In Ben Tre, South Vietnam, Arnett quoted an unnamed U.S. major in a story dated February 7, 1968. The major said that "it had become necessary to destroy the town to save it."

This quote quickly grew at the hands of the anti-war movement into a fusillade of effective rhetorical attacks on the war against communism in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. The quote—used exclusively to prove the callousness and barbarity of the government's military efforts—did much to turn Americans against the war.

Yet for all the political consequences that flowed from his reporting, Arnett never revealed his source. Now, after the deceitful use of quotes attacking U.S. policy in Vietnam in Arnett's CNN/*Time* interviews, we may ask whether Arnett ever had a source.

That same day, from Ben Tre, Dan Southerland reported for UPI the following quote, attributed to Air Force Sergeant John M. Todd: "The Vietcong were holed up in a lot of buildings and there was no way to get them out but to shell and bomb them out."

Not quite the same rhetorical bite of Arnett's quote, but Southerland did quote a legitimate source.

Stephen B. Young
St. Paul, MN

McCain's Leviathan

Sen. John McCain is, by all accounts, a man of sterling character—just the sort of man who may appeal to Americans after Clinton (Andrew Ferguson, "The Media's Favorite Republican," July 6/July 13). But I'm afraid that his proposed "government that adheres to principle" isn't that at all.

A government that truly adheres to principle would adhere to the Constitution, performing only those functions within its authority. But neither Sen. McCain nor any other major political figure is pursuing that sort of government.

What McCain seems to want is a government that will just, well, *do good*. The most disturbing thing isn't that some of his causes (tobacco, campaign-finance "reform") align closely with liberalism's priorities. Rather, it's that McCain shows little grasp of constitutional limits on government.

Matt Kaufman
Colorado Springs, CO

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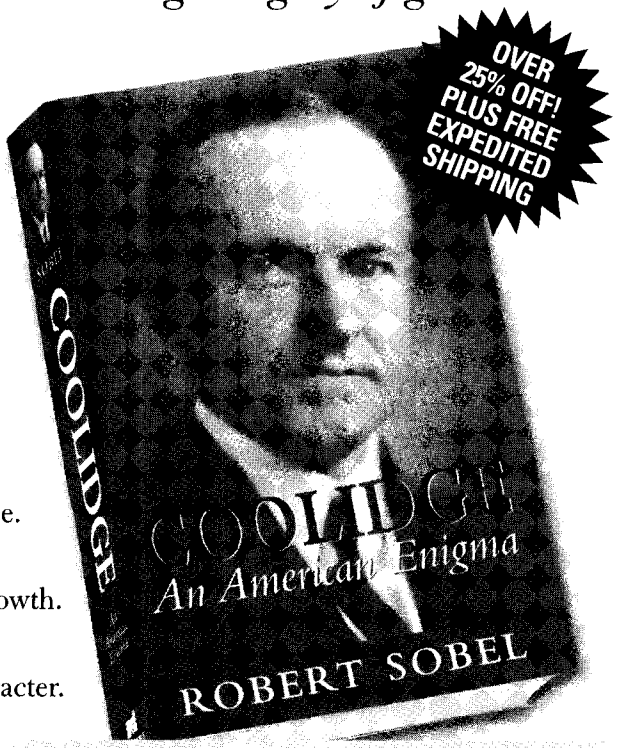

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Casual

. . . AND LADIES OF THE CLUBS

Nick Hornby stopped in Washington, D.C., a few weeks back to read from his new novel, *About a Boy*. The bookstore was packed with enthusiastic fans, and I myself soon fell under the sway of his marvelously funny book. Yet as Hornby read, I became aware of another feeling, too—a distance from his prose, as if I were eavesdropping on an unfamiliar world.

I traced this sense of strangeness to nothing short of gender bias. Hornby, you see, writes about *men* —male thoughts and male calculations. His books are full of professional soccer and guys who sit around making lists of the Top Five Best Movies.

About a Boy has two protagonists: a masculine and very cool middle-aged man and a troubled adolescent boy. Thinking about Hornby's reading, I realized I rarely read books by men, about men. Books that have a "man's man" perspective—presumably loaded with profanity, sex, and sports—just don't seem to find their way into my hands.

What's more, I know I am not alone in this unintended aversion to maleness in fiction. Francine Prose mentions the phenomenon in an article in *Harper's*, "Scent of a Woman's Ink." "Most books are bought by women," she writes, "who tend to read novels by female authors." And all the gynocentric books I've been reading were selected not just by me, but the women in my two book clubs.

Both groups read fiction. In the first, the average age is 25, and I am one of two married women. In the second, the average age is 35, and I am one of four who have no children.

Politically, both clubs might as well be subsidized by Richard Mellon Scaife. These ladies are, one and all, red-meat conservatives. Many of the 25-year-olds work for the Heritage Foundation, and many of the 35-year-olds are proud full-time mothers.

Women to the left of us might guess that we sit around reading gung-ho military tracts like *The Hunt for Red October* or Ernest Hemingway at his most misogynist. We don't. Identity politics plays no part in our choice of books. No one stands up and says, "As a member of the vast right-wing conspiracy, I insist on the spy novels of William F. Buckley."

Likewise, no one suggests a book because she happens to be an Irish-American, a Jewish-American, or a Woman of the Indigenous Peoples. One group even went so far as to ban any book selected by Oprah Winfrey's book club, which is given to sappy gynobibliophilia.

Our ideology notwithstanding, we anti-gender-feminism, anti-identity-politics Hillary-bashers still tend to read books by or about women.

In the last year, the two groups have read 15 books. Females wrote nine of them: *Possession* by A.S. Byatt, *Bellwether* by Connie Willis, *A Thousand Acres* by Jane Smiley, *Mansfield Park* by Jane Austen, *The Family Markowitz* by Allegra Goodman, *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison, *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy, *Valley of the Dolls* by Jaqueline Susann, and *Stones from the River* by Ursula Hegi.

Six of the books were written by men, but three of these are primarily about women: *Memoirs of a Geisha* by Arthur Golden, *Breakfast at Tiffany's* by Truman Capote, and *The Notebook* by Nicholas Sparks. The other three were practically obligatory reads by male authors: *100 Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* by John Berendt, and *Angela's Ashes* by Frank McCourt.

The disparity, though not extreme, is enough to suggest we ought to consider an affirmative-action policy for manly books. It's an impulse that doesn't withstand scrutiny. "The best writing," as Prose discerns, "has as little to do with gender as it does with nationality or with the circumscriptions of time. . . . There is no male or female language, only the truthful or fake, the precise or the vague, the inspired or the pedestrian."

Even so, I made a gesture toward leveling the playing field by championing *About a Boy* at my latest book-club gatherings. My account of the plot—independently wealthy man invents fictional child in order to meet single mothers—drew upturned noses and furrowed brows from both groups. Yet masculinity triumphed. The 35-year-olds agreed to read *About a Boy*, in addition to *The Leopard* by Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa. The 25-year-olds selected Hornby's first novel, *High Fidelity*, over two ultra-feminine books, *Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood* by Rebecca Wells and Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*.

My initiative, then, carried the day. Still, I feel a little wary. Our new selections will give both reading lists a Viagra-like boost of manliness. Who knows? By next month, we may be reading Norman Mailer.

PIA NORDLINGER

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"Responsible Adults" and Abortion

Last Wednesday morning there appeared on the op-ed page of the *New York Times* a paid advertisement from the Planned Parenthood Federation of America. The federation wanted *Times* readers to understand the 105th Congress's various legislative sins against "family planning." The federation also wanted to warn us all about a few such sins still forthcoming—bad votes *in utero*, as it were. Certain of our senators and representatives, for example, intend to "bar teens from turning to a responsible adult if they can't talk to their parents about abortion."

The reference here was to a bill sponsored by Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and scheduled for final consideration in the House later the same day this ad was published. We will return to that measure's merits in a moment. It is worth considering, first, exactly whom, in context of this controversy, Planned Parenthood considers a "responsible adult." This is not a theoretical question. One Rosa Marie Hartford, of Shunk, Pennsylvania, directly inspired the legislation at issue.

In the summer of 1995, Hartford's son, Michael Kilmer, had eyes for a local girl named Crystal Lane. Crystal's mother, Joyce Farley, vehemently objected to his attentions—Kilmer was 18 at the time; Crystal was only 12, just out of seventh grade. But the young man secretly pursued Farley's daughter just the same. And one day in July, he plied Crystal with alcohol, so much that she passed out cold. While she was unconscious, Kilmer had sex with her.

At 6:30 A.M. on August 31, 1995, a few weeks past her thirteenth birthday, Crystal Lane crept out of her house, leaving a note for her mother. She had gone to school early, the note said, and would return late from an afternoon visit with friends. But Crystal saw neither school nor friends that day. Instead, she was escorted by Rosa Marie Hartford to the Southern Tier Women's Services clinic, 60 miles away in Binghamton, New York—where, unlike in Pennsylvania, no parent or judge need be notified in advance of an abortion performed on a minor child. Even when the abortion is intended, as in this instance, to destroy evidence of a rape.

At the Binghamton clinic, the rapist's mother identified the girl as her stepdaughter, "Crystal Hartford." She presented and signed a false medical history, paid for the abortion, and bought Crystal lunch when the deed was done. Then Rosa Marie Hartford escorted Crystal back to Pennsylvania, dropping her off at 5:30 P.M. 30 miles from home, bleeding and in severe pain from what would turn out to be botched surgery. By this time, Joyce Farley, panicked by her daughter's odd note and unexplained absence from Sullivan County High School, had already contacted the Pennsylvania state police.

Michael Kilmer eventually plea-bargained multiple charges of rape and corrupting a minor. He is currently serving a 30-month prison term. Rosa Marie Hartford was sentenced to probation upon conviction of "interfering with the custody of a minor" during Crystal Lane's trip to Binghamton. At trial and on appeal (the charge is now being reprosecuted for technical reasons), Hartford was represented by abortion's leading legal advocate, Kathryn Kolbert of the Center for Reproductive Law and Policy. Kolbert minimized her client's offense as akin to having helpfully "taken this girl to New York to buy a toothbrush or go to the mall." In any case, she contended, child-custody statutes are unenforceable whenever a teenage girl seeks to terminate a pregnancy, since a "young woman's constitutional right to choose abortion outweighs any interest her parents have" in the decision.

This argument—Joyce Farley loses all rights to counsel her daughter, or even to know the girl's whereabouts, the moment Crystal Lane begins travel toward an abortion clinic—is a familiar one. Kathryn Kolbert used much the same argument as lead plaintiff's attorney in the 1992 Supreme Court case *Planned Parenthood* v. *Casey*. She was rebuffed by the justices, who upheld as valid any state law like Pennsylvania's that requires guidance from a parent—or from a judge acting confidentially in a par-

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ent's stead—before an underage girl may receive an abortion.

Kolbert and Planned Parenthood were rebuffed again last Wednesday by the House of Representatives, which voted 276-150 to impose federal, Class One misdemeanor penalties on anyone who knowingly spirits a minor girl across state lines for the purpose of evading parental-notification and consent rules governing abortion. In essence, the House sustained the unimpeachable judgment of more than 20 state legislatures that people like Rosa Marie Hartford are *not* "responsible adults." The Senate version of this "Child Custody Protection Act," sponsored by Spencer Abraham and Jeff Sessions, was approved by the Judiciary Committee this past Thursday, and will likely win final passage at some point in the next few months. The bill will then be sent to the president. Who, his aides say, will immediately veto it.

Which brings us to a separate but related abortion issue. In its *New York Times* advertorial, Planned Parenthood also complained that Congress is "trying to outlaw the safest and most common forms of abortion." This was a peculiar protest. The only "form" of abortion Congress has lately attempted to ban is the infamously hideous, late-term "partial-birth" procedure. And precisely because partial-birth is hideous, as readers of this magazine are well aware, abortion advocates have never before been prepared to acknowledge that it is "common." Perhaps the federation's advertising agency was unaware of this key political nuance.

THE CLAIM THAT PARTIAL-BIRTH REMAINS THE "SAFEST" SURGERY HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE PARTY LINE. AND IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN A LIE.

There was clearly no mistake, however, in Planned Parenthood's apparent insistence that partial-birth remains the "safest" surgery for women in certain rare medical emergencies. This has always been the abortion movement's basic party line. And it has always been a lie. Here, too, recent real-world experience is at war with pro-choice dogma.

On April 7 of this year, Louann Herron visited the A-Z Women's Center in Phoenix, Arizona, seeking an abortion. Her pregnancy was entirely without medical complication; she was undergoing a divorce and she simply did not want a child. But an ultrasound exam conducted at the center indicated that Herron's baby was more than 23 weeks old, and a second exam placed the age at more than 24 weeks—potentially "viable" outside the womb, according to the best available science, and therefore protected from death by abortion under Arizona state law. Herron was initially informed that the clinic could not help her.

But she wept at the news and appealed the decision. So she was invited back to A-Z nine days later, by then about 26 weeks pregnant. A nurse who was present there April 16 has since told the *Arizona Republic* that Dr. John Biskind instructed an assistant to fake a third ultrasound exam and produce results that suggested a less-than-24-week pregnancy. Biskind next dilated Herron's cervix. The following day, at noon, he subjected her to a partial-birth abortion. Biskind finished the procedure at 12:40 P.M. and left the clinic at 2 o'clock. Two hours later, Louann Herron was dead; Biskind had perforated her uterus, producing a massive hemorrhage.

Three weeks ago, on June 29, a 17-year-old girl entered Biskind's office. She, too, like Louann Herron, sought a purely elective abortion to end an otherwise normal pregnancy. She, too, like Louann Herron, was given a questionable ultrasound exam. The girl was 23.6 weeks pregnant, the clinic's records certify. But when Biskind performed a partial-birth abortion on this patient June 30, he suddenly "discovered" that he was about to puncture the skull—and suction the brains—of a full-term, six-pound, two-ounce baby girl. So he delivered the infant alive, after inflicting a skull fracture and two deep facial lacerations. She will be adopted by a Texas couple, the only known survivor of a partial-birth assault.

This week, the House of Representatives will vote to override the president's veto of a federal ban on this allegedly "safest and most common" of abortions. They will probably succeed. Sometime soon, the Senate may make a similar attempt. But there is a fair chance the Senate will fail; it last approved the partial-birth ban with just 64 votes, three short of the two-thirds majority required to enact a bill over the president's objections. Partial-birth, in other words, may live—that those like Louann Herron, and uncounted unborn children, might continue to die.

There is much to say about all this, and THE WEEKLY STANDARD has said a good bit of it before. One thing bears repeating, though. There is now one reason, above all others, why the United States maintains the Western world's most extreme and destructive abortion regime—one reason why the Rosa Marie Hartfords and Dr. John Biskinds still run amok, beyond effective public sanction. That reason's name is William Jefferson Clinton.

—David Tell, for the Editors

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LINDA'S LONG, STRANGE TRIP

by Jay Nordlinger

ON JULY 7, AS LINDA TRIPP was testifying for a third day before Kenneth Starr's grand jury, Stephen Montanarelli, a Democratic prosecutor in Maryland, had a surprise announcement: He was going to launch a grand-jury investigation of his own, into Tripp's taping of phone calls with Monica Lewinsky. Thus did Tripp's life, already messy, become suddenly messier.

Montanarelli is the head of an office—rare in states—designed to probe government corruption. As Joseph diGenova, a former U.S. attorney and independent counsel, puts it, Montanarelli is "a sort of statutory special prosecutor, a local Ken Starr." He has until now been known as relatively free of political bias.

When Montanarelli made his announcement, Republicans, along with Tripp and her lawyers, cried foul. They objected to his remarkable timing and noted (correctly) that he had in the past refused to prosecute persons who were not state officials. So why the pursuit of Tripp? Republicans had no trouble answering: Montanarelli, they said, had bowed to political pressure, as evidenced by a letter signed by 49 state Democrats howling for Tripp's head.

Kent Lemon

Stephen Montanarelli

Initially, the case had fallen to a county prosecutor, Marna McLendon, a Republican, who protested, "Whatever we do, or don't do, will be subject to charges of political partisanship and political motivation." In late January, Montanarelli himself advised McLendon to take no action on Tripp's taping until Starr completed his work. He told the press at the time, "This should defer to the federal investigation. People disagree, but [McLendon] doesn't have a case." Montanarelli went on to say, "I don't think there's any knowledge that [Tripp] knew the Maryland law [which requires 'two-party consent' to the taping of phone calls]. The prosecutor has to have that evidence going in, or [the case] will be dismissed."

After weeks of pounding by Democrats, McLendon passed the matter to Montanarelli, explaining that she wanted to "take the politics out of the case." Yet Democrats were not appeased. A member of the Maryland House Judiciary Committee griped, "[This is] a very clever Machiavellian political move to send the issue to a legal dungeon." A day after receiving the case, Montanarelli, from the dungeon, told the *Washington Post* that he would not initiate any prosecution while the Starr probe continued: "We'd be wanting the same witnesses and the same documents at the same time. This isn't just any federal investigation. It's one of the biggest in the nation, and it involves the president of the United States. Why should a Maryland prosecutor intervene?"

Obviously, Montanarelli changed his mind. His decision to prosecute is a flat contradiction of his repeated statements over five months—besides which, virtually everyone familiar with Maryland law considers the case a certain loser. Says Joe diGenova, "The question is, Did [Tripp] know it was illegal to tape" (without Lewinsky's permission)? "That is a very heavy burden for a prosecutor to prove. The person usually has to admit it, and Tripp is under no legal obligation to cooperate with the prosecutor. I don't see how Montanarelli meets the burden."

Furthermore, it is widely assumed that Tripp, back in January, received from Starr the type of immunity that would shield her from legal repercussions at the state level. DiGenova says that "once you immunize an act, you create problems for other prosecutors," meaning that Tripp is in all likelihood "protected from heat-seeking missiles in Maryland."

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Indeed, James Moody, an early Tripp lawyer, told the *New York Times*, "I asked for immunity and she got it. I knew it was routine for whistle-blowers to be in fear of retaliation, and so I made the request." Yet Anthony Zaccagnini, Tripp's current lead counsel, says that Montanarelli's action prevents Tripp, and her lawyers as well, from speaking publicly about the tapes until even the barest threat of state jeopardy has passed.

For almost half a year, Linda Tripp lay low, not uttering a peep, waiting for her chance to appear before the grand jury in Washington. All the while, say some who know her, she nursed the hope that she would be vindicated once she could explain.

Her day finally arrived on June 30, when she began her testimony. But only the jurors could hear her. Outside, her name was still mud, as she was depicted in the media as a snitch, a hustler—someone who would wreck a friendship and roil a country for the sake of a book deal. The comedians, of course, had a field day with her looks.

The Tripp camp, though, is beginning to respond. The former White House secretary—more talked about than talking—is entering a new phase in the sex-and-obstruction saga: spending dozens of hours with the grand jury, fending off Montanarelli, dispatching her surrogates to the TV studios, introducing an Internet Web site (on which she solicits funds), and anticipating a resolution of the Pentagon affair that she construes as an attempt by her many enemies to bring her low.

Rep. Gerald Solomon, Republican of New York, is keenly interested in that attempt to harm Tripp. He is chairman of the House Rules Committee, and he has grown impatient for a long-promised Defense Department report on a gross violation of Tripp's privacy. In mid-March, the Pentagon's public-affairs office released information from Tripp's confidential security file to the media, apparently in order to incriminate her. When Solomon learned of this breach, he fired off letters to the attorney general and the president, asking whether anyone at the White House had requested documents dealing with Tripp, particularly in light of the FBI-files controversy. Neither letter received a response.

Three and a half months later, Judicial Watch, the public-interest group that is vexing the Clinton administration with almost 20 lawsuits, deposed Terry Good, chief recordkeeper in the White House. Good testified that the White House counsel's office had requested "anything and everything that we might have in our files relating to Linda Tripp." He recalled that one of those documents was a memorandum dealing with her employment. Tripp is one of the 1,000 or so former Bush and Reagan administration employees whose FBI files were kept in the Clinton White House. An administration-provided list of those files indicates three items under Tripp's name, including a memorandum of an unspecified nature.

Solomon, on hearing of Good's testimony, was incensed anew, and he asked the Pentagon to give him a date certain for its report on the Tripp disclosure. "July 9," came the reply. When that day passed without any report, he sent a letter to defense secretary William Cohen, an old Capitol Hill colleague, calling the Pentagon's "continued delay and vagueness" "unacceptable." He also mentioned Cohen's own role as a young House member during the Watergate hearings, saying, "You have a unique appreciation of my position and understand the importance of timeliness in matters relative to an Impeachment Inquiry involving the President of the United States."

Then, on July 16, Solomon took the aggressive step of writing to Starr, noting the Good deposition and citing the "potential obstruction of a Congressional Investigation." He also complained of the "political dossiers" compiled by James Carville, once Bill Clinton's chief campaign strategist and now his most outlandish flack. Said Solomon, "I fear that there is an unholy nexus between the inappropriately obtained personnel information [meaning the 1,000 FBI files] and the political agenda of Carville." He further described the treatment of Tripp as the "intimidation of a Federal witness," an example of "the damage the President's political team is capable of, and apparently intent upon, inflicting." He called on Starr to take "appropriate action."

Thus, the intrigue and, to a degree, mystery surrounding Tripp continue. Tripp's advisers, according to a source familiar with their thinking, trust that there is a "moral undercurrent" in the public, as yet untapped. They take heart in a *Time*/CNN poll showing that Lewinsky's "unfavorable" rating is even higher than Tripp's—69 percent to 52 percent. (The two women have the same "favorable" rating: an abysmal 12 percent.) Says the source, "The other side is doing a good job of selling Linda as self-righteous, vindictive, disgruntled, and out to write a book and make a buck, when there is a huge segment of the population that, while not agreeing with her methods, may stand with her and understand the pressure-cooker she found herself in." The Tripp side seeks to emphasize a contrast: "Monica of Beverly Hills 90210 versus Linda of Columbia, Maryland."

To this end, they have installed their Web site. (Quipped Jay Leno on the *Tonight Show*, "There's one

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site you pray doesn't have nude pictures!") It includes a highly stylized photo of Tripp, as though to answer every cruel jibe. It also offers light biographical information—Tripp "is an avid collector of 18th century antiques, porcelain, and books"—along with a pledge from Tripp that she will divulge everything to the public as soon as she has finished her grand-jury testimony. Tripp further states that she has been wrongfully demoted from her job at the Pentagon, assigned instead to a "menial task" that "foretells" her "eventual termination for cooperating with the Independent Counsel's investigation."

The Web site, most notably, is home to the "Linda Tripp Legal Defense Fund" (Leno: "Do you believe the nerve of these people? I gave enough to that 'Save the Whales' thing"). Her legal bills, Tripp says, have mounted to $100,000 (which, cracked Conan O'Brien of *Late Night*, is bad news, "because now she might have to pose nude for *Playboy*"). In addition, Tripp is hawking "I Believe Linda Tripp" bumper stickers (derived from the Anita Hill original). Her strategists believe that, if people are allowed to know her, they will warm to her, and revolt against the widespread denigration of her.

Maybe so, maybe not. But at least Tripp has joined, however modestly, the public-relations battle. "Friends don't tape friends!" cry the anti-Tripps. "Friends don't ask friends to commit crimes!" reply the pro-Tripps (decidedly fewer in number). The *Tonight* show has an actress play Tripp in a "Cross-Your-Friends Bra." Tripp's small circle claims that she is the one person in the whole, fetid affair who is committed to telling the truth.

The nation's judgment of Tripp is probably tied to its ultimate judgment of the president. Tripp believes unshakably in what she is doing—but the price, undeniably, is great.

Jay Nordlinger is associate editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

HAPPY DAYS ARE HERE

by Fred Barnes

DONNA SHALALA, the secretary of health and human services, smiles when asked about partial privatization of Social Security and utters not a single unkind word. That she hasn't trashed privatization is significant, Shalala points out, and she's right. Her attitude mirrors what Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York found when he told White House officials of his plan to let workers use roughly one-sixth of their payroll tax for private investing. Not a peep of protest was voiced. Nor has President Clinton himself, in his public or private comments, ruled out partial privatization. "He's been careful not to," says a senior White House aide. In fact, Clinton seems reconciled to accepting partial privatization as part of a bipartisan Social Security reform package next year, the aide says.

I interpret all this as evidence Republicans are on the brink of pulling off the fourth major conservative victory of the Clinton years, this time bringing the free market to the largest, most stagnant federal program of all. A decade ago—heck, four or five years ago—this was unthinkable. Republicans were routinely pilloried for even talking about changes in Social Security. And as recently as the 1996 campaign, most Republicans figured Social Security was an issue to avoid at all costs. Now, their fondest dream—private investment accounts using payroll tax funds—is likely to be realized. And I suspect this will make Republicans miserable, feeling they've failed again.

Nothing depresses Republicans like winning, and the more conservative the Republican, the more depressed he gets. No matter how sweeping the victory, it never meets Republicans' expectations. Why? Because they establish goals that aren't reachable in the current political climate. Worse, any single triumph represents success for only a fraction of their agenda, and Republicans tend to obsess on the parts that haven't been enacted. Worst of all, an alien political figure like Clinton may claim some of the credit, and actually deserve some.

Start with the first great conservative victory of the Clinton years, the defeat of the president's health-care plan. This was an epochal event, the stamping out of big-government liberalism. No longer do liberals propose programs that involve big spending, sweeping regulations, and more bureaucracy. (Okay, the tobacco bill was an exception, but it was defeated, too.) In attacking ClintonCare, Republicans managed to change public opinion about the proper role of the federal government. Yet they've scarcely savored this victory. On the contrary, they're unhappy because liberals haven't given up but instead have turned to the back-door, incremental approach to enlarging government's role in health care. My point is, Republicans

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expected more than they have the power to achieve. Their standard of success was that liberals would cease and desist, something only God can bring about.

The second conservative victory was the balanced budget. This has always been a goal of Republicans. And they even managed to exceed the goal by bringing about a balanced budget *without* a tax increase. Back in 1995, when Clinton was being pressured to agree to this, liberals like then-labor secretary Robert Reich and every White House aide except Don Baer and Bill Curry opposed the move. The liberals came close to persuading the president. After all, Clinton had never been an advocate of a balanced budget. He'd intervened with Congress to block a balanced-budget amendment to the Constitution. But Clinton buckled, on the advice of Dick Morris, and went along with Republicans. The result: an unsatisfied feeling among Republicans. They didn't get a constitutional amendment and they have to share credit with Clinton for what they did produce.

Conservative victory number three was welfare reform. I'm still amazed at the extent of this triumph. Perhaps some folks expected that welfare as a federal entitlement would be eliminated, but I didn't. Neither did the Clinton White House, which didn't want to kill that or any other entitlement. The president's domestic-policy staff spends much of its time dreaming up new entitlements, not targeting existing ones for elimination. Anyway, again with Dick Morris's intervention, Clinton knuckled under and signed a bill that most Democrats loathed. Thus, the president got some of the credit for welfare reform. And Republicans got heartburn, all the more when Congress shaved back on welfare reform in 1997.

Now, Republicans are setting themselves up for disappointment with the fourth conservative victory of the Clinton era. As soon as Moynihan introduced his Social Security reform bill with partial privatization, Republicans and conservative reformers began raising the bar. By next winter, when the president calls in congressional leaders to concoct a bipartisan bill, Republicans may have their hearts set on full privatization or at least far greater privatization than Moynihan proposes. Chances are, they won't achieve that. Chances are, they'll think they came up short once again.

Republicans, and especially their followers on talk radio and in grass-roots conservative groups, ought to take a fresh look at the Clinton years. One Republican who has is Rep. Bill Paxon of New York, who's retiring after 10 years. "History will judge this time as a success for Republicans," he says. "It's time for us to lighten up a bit." And accept the fact that, aside from the multitude of scandals, the only important things that happened during the Clinton presidency were conservative victories.

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

ADVERTISING INEPTITUDE

by John P. Walters and James F. X. O'Gara

IN ONE OF THE MOST COMPELLING TV ADS in the White House's new anti-drug campaign, 13-year-old Oakland native Kevin Scott talks about the daily nightmare he faces walking home from school past open-air drug markets. "The dealers are scared of police, but they aren't scared of me. And they don't take 'no' for an answer." The concluding voiceover intones: "To Kevin Scott and all the other kids who take the long way home, we hear you. Don't give up."

Let's hope Kevin and "all the other kids" weren't watching July 9 when President Clinton essentially told them his latest effort, a $1 billion taxpayer-funded advertising campaign, won't focus on those drug dealers at all. "There are some places where kids are subject to more temptation than others. There are some blocks where there are more drug dealers than others. All of us have to deal with that," said the president, "but we know that the more young people fear drugs, the more they disapprove of them, the less likely they are to use them." Added drug czar Barry McCaffrey, "If you want a war on drugs, you have to sit down at your own kitchen table and talk to your children." Presumably after they've dodged the drug dealers on the way home.

Two days later, in his Saturday radio address, President Clinton had more drug news. But again, he made no mention of the ongoing scandal of open-air drug markets. No, the message for Kevin and "all the other kids" was that the federal government is going to put a few more million tax dollars into the notoriously under-performing drug-treatment system. The Kevins of America might be forgiven for wondering if the adults are really paying attention.

In truth, there is nothing wrong with an ad cam-

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paign designed to change youthful attitudes and engage parents and responsible adults. Such campaigns have been effective in the past (when they were funded largely by private contributions)—but only in conjunction with a concerted national effort to target drug use and trafficking on all levels. This time, alas, the ads are being rolled out as a substitute for the national leadership that the president, his drug czar, his Attorney General, and others have failed to supply.

Sen. John Ashcroft astutely said of the new ad campaign: "I do believe that parents need to talk to children, but let's do what government is supposed to do and make drug use risky." And where were the rest of our national leaders? Well, Newt Gingrich joined the president at the gala ad-campaign kickoff and proclaimed himself "delighted . . . at what I hope will be a decisive campaign in saving our country and our children from drugs." This is the same Republican leader who for more than a year has been promising to transform our national anti-drug effort into a real war, "the way we fought World War II."

No serious person can believe that even the best ad campaign is an appropriate centerpiece for the effort to reverse current trends. Consider: Since 1992, drug use by young people has increased more rapidly than at any time since modern measurement began in the 1970s. Never has the age of first use of marijuana, cocaine, heroin, or LSD been lower. Never has the number of emergency-room cases related to drugs been higher—and the data go back more than two decades. Never has the availability of drugs been greater, with record low prices and record high purities. Never have the forces for the wholesale legalization of drug sales and use been more powerful. Never has an administration established a worse record with regard to the drug problem, and never has one been held less accountable.

Here's the problem: Drug use can be intensely pleasurable, so pleasurable it can lead the user, in all too many cases, to sacrifice everything else for the sake of obtaining and using drugs. The attractiveness of drugs can be countered only by moral precepts that are enforced when they are violated. If those in authority do not address the issue seriously, they teach that drug use is not a serious matter. And if they say drug use is intolerable but fail to act effectively to stop and punish those who sell and use drugs, their actions convey a much more powerful lesson than their words.

Reducing the supply of drugs is critically important because drug use—whether by non-addicts or addicts—is fueled by their very ubiquity. A nation that permits wide availability of dangerous drugs is sending its citizens an unmistakable message: We are largely indifferent to drug use. The wide availability of drugs entails the normalization of drug use. The harsh reality is that drug use begins in experimentation, with a substantial portion of users escalating to addiction, which often ends in death. A free, democratic society ought to display a special intolerance for those things that undermine the capacity of its citizens to be self-governing.

Yet the current trend has been just the reverse—to decriminalize drug use and substitute "harm reduction" for an intolerance of drug trafficking and use. Accept drug use as normal and unavoidable, Americans have been told. The dramatic reductions of the Reagan and Bush years have been attacked as unsustainable largely because they were not sustained. In fairness, one thing the new ads may do is counter some of the drift toward the normalization of drug use (which is why the legalizers have been loudly attacking the campaign).

To see what's in store if current trends are left unchecked, one need look no farther than Baltimore. Mayor Kurt Schmoke has taken the path of normalization—reducing drug enforcement, distributing clean needles to addicts, and emphasizing treatment and "harm reduction." For all this, the legalization movement has celebrated Schmoke as a national hero. Baltimore has not only gotten its full measure of federal drug-control funds, it has even received special, additional federal money, as well as $25 million for "harm reduction" efforts from the drug-legalizing philanthropist George Soros.

Yet President Clinton's own drug-policy office recently published a stark description of the appalling conditions in Baltimore: Heroin is readily available, with city dealers moving into suburbs and high schools; cocaine is plentiful in both crack and powder forms; and marijuana, a law-enforcement official reports, "is not being seen as a drug." In fact, since Schmoke took office in 1987, Baltimore has become the most addiction-ridden metropolitan area in the country per capita. Washington, D.C., had 89 emergency-room cases related to cocaine per 100,000 in population in 1996—Baltimore had 362. Washington had 40 such cases related to heroin per 100,000 population in 1996—Baltimore had 346. Welcome to the brave new world.

Parents and responsible adults need to teach young people that drug use is wrong and harmful and that for this reason those who sell and use drugs will be punished. Television ads may be of some help, but what is vital is that national leaders at the same time carry out their responsibilities: in foreign policy, holding source and transit countries accountable for stopping the flow; in defense policy, making interdiction a priority; and in law enforcement, insisting that

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major trafficking organizations are systematically targeted and dismantled by federal authorities and that open-air drug markets are closed by local authorities. Treatment that works (including faith-based treatment programs) should be funded.

Americans will take care of what happens around the kitchen table if our leaders will only pay more attention to what happens in the streets. Think about that the next time you see Kevin Scott on television.

John P. Walters is former deputy director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy. James F.X. O'Gara is former drug-policy adviser to Senate Judiciary Committee chairman Orrin Hatch.

THE UN-SILVER BULLET

by Matthew Rees

DURING THE SIX MONTHS he's been running for Congress, Paul Ryan, a Republican, estimates he's spoken to 30,000 people. When he's asked questions, Social Security and taxes almost always come up. So how many people have pressed him for his views on campaign-finance reform? "Somewhere between three and six," says Ryan.

The dearth of attention given to campaign reform in Ryan's southeastern Wisconsin district—normally a hotbed of good-government activism—doesn't bode well for Democratic candidates nationally. They've been hoping to score points by criticizing the GOP for blocking reforms, but it now looks like there's little political advantage to be had. A recent ABC News/*Washington Post* poll asked people about 16 issues, ranging from tax reform to foreign affairs, and how much importance they attached to each. The good news for Democrats was that 71 percent said campaign-finance reform was either "very important" or "somewhat important." The bad news was that this ranked dead last when compared with the intensity of feelings about the other 15 issues.

These poll numbers got wide circulation in Republican circles last week, and they bolster long-standing GOP sentiment that no one ever pays a political price for opposing campaign-finance reform. Indeed, Ryan says he'd be happy to have his Democratic opponent make the issue the centerpiece of her campaign. And on Capitol Hill, House Republicans can hardly contain their glee over the decision of House Democrats to spend the past few months wrangling over campaign-finance reform when they could have used the time to address issues on which GOP members feel vulnerable, such as health care. Says a Republican aide involved with crafting the party's campaign-reform strategy, "We always knew this was a dumb issue for Democrats. We just didn't know they'd be dumb enough to get so bogged down with it."

Republicans weren't always so confident. Earlier this year, they were refusing to give floor time to a campaign-reform bill sponsored by Rep. Chris Shays, a moderate Connecticut Republican, and Rep. Martin Meehan, a liberal Massachusetts Democrat. But when it looked like Shays and Meehan were going to succeed in forcing the bill to the floor through an extraparliamentary maneuver, House Republican leaders moved to bring up other campaign-reform legislation. Yet the bills were to be brought up only under a special rule requiring that they pass with a two-thirds majority.

That arrangement collapsed in April when a few Republicans, and most Democrats, threatened to revive the extraparliamentary maneuvering if the Shays-Meehan bill wasn't brought up as well. Shays and others said what they really wanted was a "fair and open" debate. Republican opponents of Shays, like Tom DeLay, the House whip, concluded the best strategy was to give the reformers exactly what they wanted. This meant an "open rule," whereby multiple campaign-reform bills could be considered, as could an unlimited number of amendments. House speaker Newt Gingrich endorsed DeLay's idea, as did Gerry Solomon, who as chairman of the Rules Committee had final say over whether an open rule would be permitted.

For Republicans, the beauty of the open rule was simple. While it would result in some legislative chaos, it would prolong debate on a Democratic-oriented issue few voters care about. Moreover, the reformers couldn't make a stink about an open rule—and didn't—because it reflected their desire for "fair and open" debate. Shays said it was "everything we wanted and hoped for."

Armed with the open rule, DeLay stayed on the offensive. He brought seven other House Republicans together—they dubbed themselves the Free Speech Coalition—to fight the Shays-Meehan bill, and one of their first acts was to bring to the floor a constitutional amendment empowering Congress and the states to set campaign-spending limits. This was pure mischief, as the amendment had been originally pro-

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posed by Richard Gephardt, the House Democratic leader, and had no chance of passage. But DeLay, who opposed the amendment, wanted to highlight the Democratic mindset on campaign reform. He scored a handy victory when 345 House members voted against the Gephardt proposal, and only 29 voted for it. Gephardt, who had pledged a major effort in the bill's behalf, never even came to the House floor the evening it was being debated.

The Free Speech Coalition followed up by drafting hundreds of amendments to the campaign-finance bills. The goal was simple—slow the bill's movement through the House and embarrass the Clinton administration. Simple enough: On July 14, an amendment banning non-citizens from contributing to a federal campaign passed the House. Other amendments still pending include a requirement that the White House disclose the names of all the people who fly on Air Force One—a dig at Clinton's alleged use of the plane to reward big contributors—and an affirmation that a "controlling legal authority" exists barring fund-raising on federal property (a dig at Vice President Gore).

Whether the ultimate goal—defeating the Shays-Meehan bill—will be achieved won't be known for a few weeks, as a vote isn't expected until early August. But even if the bill passes the House, Republicans aren't much concerned. Trent Lott, the Senate Republican leader, is strongly opposed to the reforms outlined by Shays and Meehan, and would block a vote on them, just as he did earlier this year.

Meehan believes the GOP's obstinacy could be one of the vehicles Democrats ride to winning back the House. Oh? The last time Republicans filibustered on campaign-finance reform shortly before an election was 1994. Remember what a big year that was for Democrats?

Matthew Rees is a staff writer for THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

MURPHY BROWN, REDUX

by David Popenoe

IN 1992, AFTER DAN QUAYLE GAVE HIS "Murphy Brown" speech, the cultural elite went apoplectic. Quayle had maintained that there was evidence to show that single motherhood harms children. But who was Quayle—or anyone else, for that matter—to say that single moms can't do the job? The last thing they need is to be stigmatized. And besides, Murphy Brown is just a fictional TV character.

Then in April 1993, in a cover story in the *Atlantic* entitled "Dan Quayle Was Right," Barbara Dafoe Whitehead summarized the data suggesting that not only out-of-wedlock parenthood but also divorce has negative effects on children, and academic researchers on the family became incensed. The *Atlantic*'s précis of Whitehead's article began, "After decades of public dispute about so-called family diversity, the evidence from social science research is coming in: The dissolution of two-parent families, though it may benefit the adults involved, is harmful to many children, and dramatically undermines our society." The article prompted a deluge of mail, including a letter signed by a dozen family researchers claiming that Whitehead had grossly overplayed the social-science findings of harm to kids.

How times have changed. In a stunning admission recently noted in these pages, *Murphy*'s Candice Bergen has told newspaper and TV interviewers that, in her opinion, Dan Quayle picked "the right theme to hammer home." The body of his speech was "completely sound," she told the *Los Angeles Times*, and, speaking of Murphy Brown's out-of-wedlock childbearing experience, she added, "I didn't think it was a good message to be sending out."

There have been some equally startling, though unpublicized, recantations in the academic community. Candice Bergen didn't change her mind; she merely chose finally to speak out, presumably in conjunction with the termination of her TV series. Among family researchers, however, there seems to have been a real change of opinion.

The original outcries from both the cultural elite and academic researchers were strongly flavored by an assertion much heard at the onset of the divorce revolution and still, unfortunately, widely believed—that if breaking up (or in Murphy Brown's case, not marrying) is good for parents, it cannot be all that bad for children. What keeps parents happy should keep children happy too.

How can so mistaken an assumption have become so pervasive? In part, of course, it is a convenient, guilt-retarding rationalization for parents who are breaking up. It is also, however, a judgment that at one time had some empirical support. Back in the 1970s, some preliminary findings about the social

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consequences of divorce and resultant single-parenthood were remarkably encouraging. Two conclusions were widely trumpeted. One was that while divorce may cause short-term difficulties for children, these eventually are resolved, and children are left no worse off than before. The other was that any negative effects there are on children flow from marital conflict, not the subsequent divorce. In fact, divorce may actually make things better.

But the early studies of divorce and single-parent families did not follow their subjects over time. Most traced only the immediate effects of divorce, and only on the youngest children. Also, rather than measuring children's conditions objectively, some studies relied on parents' characterizations of the effects of the divorce—even though, as interested parties with powerful motives of self-justification and self-fulfillment, they could not be expected to be accurate informants about their own children.

Today, longitudinal studies using more objective measures of the effects of divorce have been completed by leading family researchers, and they have slowly modified the old hopeful picture of divorce.

An early indication of this change came when many of the scholars who had signed the letter of protest to the *Atlantic* got together with other divorce researchers in 1994 in Middleburg, Va., to try to develop what amounted to a counter-statement to the Whitehead article. Three years would pass before the results were finally published, in the October 1997 issue of *Family and Conciliation Courts Review*. During that time, through many drafts and as new findings about the effects of divorce became known, much of the steam behind the protest dissipated.

In the final version, cosigned by most of the participants, it is difficult to detect much disagreement with Whitehead. One conclusion:

> Overall, most children of divorce experience dramatic declines in their economic circumstances, abandonment (or the fear of abandonment) by one or both of their parents, the diminished capacity of both parents to attend meaningfully and constructively to their children's needs, . . . and diminished contact with many familiar or potential sources of psychosocial support . . . as well as familiar living settings. As a consequence, the experience of divorce is a psychosocial stressor and a significant life transition for most children, with long-term repercussions for many.

Now, two major new pieces of divorce research have been published, and they further erode the old claims that there were no long-term effects on children and that most damage was done by marital conflict before the divorce. These studies examine people's lives from childhood to adulthood.

The first is a British study drawing on a larger investigation that has been following all children born in Britain in the first week of March 1958. From this group all persons were selected who, at age 7, were living with both parents and for whom there is subsequent information about their parents' marital status. These 11,759 subjects were interviewed when they reached age 33. The results were reported in the April 1998 *American Sociological Review*, in an article whose authors include two signers of the letter to the *Atlantic*, Andrew J. Cherlin and P. Lindsay Chase-Lansdale. The study found that for these children, a substantial amount of emotional turmoil stemmed from the divorce and the chain of circumstances it created, not merely from parental conflict during the marriage. Moreover, the negative effects for the children continued even after they left home, married, and entered the labor force.

The second longitudinal study is an American one reported by sociologists Paul R. Amato, a signer of the *Atlantic* letter, and Alan Booth in *A Generation at Risk*, published by Harvard University Press in 1997. The researchers interviewed a national random sample of 2,033 married individuals in 1980 and at regular intervals thereafter. And in 1995, they interviewed 430 offspring who had been living with these couples in 1980. Many of the couples had subsequently divorced.

Like the British study, this one uncovered substantial, long-term, negative emotional consequences of divorce. It also provided verification for one of the old assumptions, finding that if pre-divorce marital conflict was very high, divorce was best for the long-term mental health of the offspring. Where marital conflict was not so high, however, divorce made things considerably worse. And, in a surprising finding, fewer than one-third of the marriages ending in divorce were determined to have been high-conflict, while nearly 70 percent were deemed low-conflict. The authors conclude with a statement that is remarkable coming from the family-research community: "Future generations would be well served if parents remained together until the children are grown."

These are merely the latest examples in a steady flow of research pointing to the same general conclusion: Divorce and single-parenthood put our children at risk, and we would be well advised to reduce the divorce rate and limit the number of single-parent families. With all due respect to the social sciences, how much more empirical research do we need to convince us of that?

***David Popenoe, a professor at Rutgers University, is co-director of the National Marriage Project and author of* Life Without Father.**

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WORDS OR WAR

Why Sanctions Are Necessary

By Elliott Abrams

In rhetoric not ordinarily heard from the business community, the new lobby known as USA*Engage warns that "two-thirds of the world's population" is now "threatened" by a novel form of "proliferation." The threat that alarms USA*Engage is not the proliferation of, say, ballistic missiles, but the spread of trade sanctions imposed by the U.S. government.

Indeed, the explicit goal of the several hundred businesses and trade associations that make up USA*Engage is to end the use of sanctions as a tool of U.S. foreign and security policy. In an extraordinary media and advertising campaign in recent months, USA*Engage, the Chamber of Commerce, the National Foreign Trade Council, the National Association of Manufacturers, and other business lobbies have worked to discredit sanctions as a blunt, overused instrument that only does harm. Last week, responding in part to this pressure, the Senate moved to lift sanctions on India and Pakistan and to weaken the force of existing and future sanctions by exempting agricultural and medical goods. A bill sponsored by Sen. Richard Lugar that would have largely gutted all future sanctions—the favored legislation of the anti-sanctions crusaders—was only narrowly turned back. Lugar's bill may well resurface this fall after a Senate task force issues its report on the issue.

As this burgeoning campaign to abolish them makes clear, sanctions are a great annoyance to the constituents of America's business lobbies. While foreign competitors, French or Japanese or German, merrily bid for contracts abroad, American companies find themselves tangled in a web of legislation designed to express disapproval, block trade in certain commodities, or perhaps deny resources to disfavored or hostile regimes. But the elimination of economic sanctions as a foreign-policy tool would be an extraordinarily radical action, for it would leave our government facing its adversaries with just two alternatives: words or war.

The history of U.S. human-rights policy shows that "mere" words can sometimes be effective tools. This is especially so when the regime under attack is pledged to respect common values, whether because it sees itself as part of the West and seeks American approval, as was the case with Latin American dictatorships over the past two decades, or because it has signed international agreements, as did the Soviet Union (which was pledged to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to the Helsinki Agreement). But words appear to have little impact on the most savage regimes, those we now call "pariah states," such as Libya and Iraq. Nor did words have much impact in past decades on the likes of Mussolini and Hitler. Confronted with hard cases, the United States may wish to reinforce its words with economic pressure.

Think of the policymaker's options. Country A is engaged in very grave human-rights abuses: a government-organized mob has killed some opposition leaders and burned down a church, and the government has jailed several honest judges and shot five journalists. Country B has been caught trying to send weapons-grade plutonium and missile-guidance systems to Iraq. Country C has just invaded an island belonging to its neighbor. We could simply denounce these acts from the podium in the State Department's press-briefing room. We could send troops to fight, as we did when Kuwait was overrun and when Grenada's government was hijacked. However, in situations where words are likely to be ignored but soldiers are unlikely to be sent, without economic sanctions the policymaker's quiver would be empty.

To escape the choice between words and war, governments for centuries have used economic pressure. Even when sanctions are mostly symbolic, they are still important, for they show that we take seriously what the regime in question is doing. More commonly, economic sanctions do have an economic effect on the targeted regime. And the proof is the fierce struggle by so many target governments to have the sanctions removed. They pay fortunes to lobbyists in Washington, and they denounce and revile the sanctions and the members of Congress who promote them—all the while insisting that the sanctions do not affect them in

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the least or that sanctions only starve children and do not hurt the regime. But with rare exceptions, American economic sanctions have a moral and an economic impact—and the target regimes deeply resent and are hurt by both.

Opponents of U.S. sanctions have made "unilateral sanctions" their special target. They argue that sanctions observed by *many* nations would be much more effective. True enough. Far better for trade with an outlaw regime to be restricted by many nations than by just one. But the argument against unilateral sanctions has two great flaws.

The first is purely pragmatic. Like all forms of collective security, multilateral sanctions require a unanimity rarely achieved in international politics. Fifty years ago Hans Morgenthau described the problem in his classic work *Politics Among Nations*:

> The logic of collective security is flawless, provided it can be made to work under the conditions prevailing on the international scene. . . . The odds, however, are strongly against such a possibility. There is nothing in past experience and in the general nature of international politics to suggest that such a situation is likely to occur.
>
> . . . Collective security, then, can succeed only on the further assumption that all or virtually all nations will come to the defense of the status quo . . . regardless of whether they could justify such a policy in view of their own individual interests.
>
> . . . What collective security demands of the individual nations is to forsake national egotisms and the national policies serving them. Collective security expects the policies of the individual nations to be inspired by the ideal of mutual assistance and a spirit of self-sacrifice. . . .
>
> Conflicts between national and supranational interests and morality are inevitable, at least for some nations [and] those nations cannot help resolving such a conflict in favor of their own individual interests and thus paralyzing the operations of the collective system.

The United States imposes economic sanctions when a large body of its citizens, as represented in Congress or by the president, conclude that some other nation's behavior is so egregious as to preclude normal economic relations. It is a fact that this point is reached rather sooner here than in most other countries, including other democracies. The French and the Japanese, for example, take a less idealistic (they would argue, less moralistic) view of their role in the world and do not like to let ideology get mixed up with commerce. For reasons that have spawned a thousand books, Americans have a different view of their nation and its foreign policy. The view that foreign relations need not reflect moral judgments is not popular here. While learned treatises and distinguished diplomats have long argued that international financial institutions, international commerce, and even our bilateral relations should not be "held hostage" to moralizing over human rights, most Americans seem to think that to carry on normal political and economic relations with oppressive regimes is distasteful and demoralizing. Congress repeatedly votes to stop such relations regardless of what our friends and allies are doing.

To argue against all unilateral sanctions, then, is to argue for subordinating America's moral judgments to an international lowest-common-denominator. It is to argue that we must wait for an international consensus that is, for all the reasons Morgenthau noted, extremely rare.

Business lobbies, by the way, do understand the logic of collective security; their united campaign to end U.S. economic sanctions meets all of Morgenthau's tests. Companies are acting "regardless of whether they could justify such a policy in view of their own individual interests" to oppose trade sanctions that do not affect them directly. Unocal, which wants the sanctions on Myanmar lifted because it is involved in a natural gas pipeline there, opposes the Cuba embargo. Caterpillar wants to sell tractors to China; it opposes sanctions on Myanmar. Mobil has petroleum interests in Nigeria; it opposes sanctions against the Sudan. USA*Engage itself consists of a large group of business lobbyists who set aside their own particular projects in order to focus on the greater good of eliminating all economic sanctions.

There is a second and deeper flaw in the argument against unilateral sanctions. It overlooks the unique position in the world now held by the United States, and underestimates the necessity of American leadership to the peace and prosperity we currently enjoy. The argument against sanctions would be far more powerful—though still not irrefutable—if it were made in Belgium or Holland. In a speech in October 1997, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright told students at Catholic University that "for almost as many years as I have been alive, the United States has played the leading role within the international system; not as sole arbiter of right and wrong, for that is a responsibility widely shared, but as pathfinder—as the nation able to show the way when others cannot." Is it possible that we must show the way with words and weapons, but refuse a leadership role when

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commercial advantage may be lost?

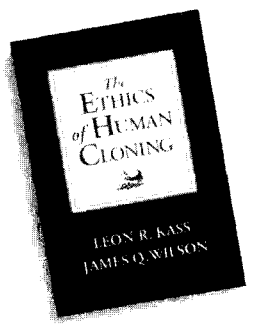
The history of this century is largely a story of progress when the United States led the international community—or, perhaps more accurately, through its leadership created an international community—and of disaster when we abandoned that role. This has been true of major security successes ranging from the creation of the League of Nations to the victory over Japan and Germany to the winning of the Cold War. It was equally true of the formation of the international financial system after World War II.

Consider an example of American leadership that is directly relevant to the sanctions case. Bribery of foreign government officials has been a common practice, especially in the Third World, when foreign investors sought favors from poorly paid officials who were supervising government contracting or privatization programs. From the viewpoint of the honest American businessman, there were two logical solutions: All foreign businessmen should stop using bribery or all should be permitted to do so. What businessmen feared was a situation in which Americans were forbidden to use bribery but their competitors were free to do so.

Yet that is precisely the system Congress imposed in 1977, when it adopted the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act in response to the Watergate special prosecutor's discovery of bribery payments to foreign officials by American corporations. Congress made the bribery of foreign officials a federal crime, rejecting the notion that competitive business advantage required—and justified—such conduct. Bribery was wrong, the law said, regardless of whether the French and the Japanese and the Germans did it. American businessmen complained, and no doubt lost some business. But the American example was not without effect. There began a campaign of official U.S. pressure on both "briber" and "bribee" governments: the former to join us in making bribery of foreign officials a crime, and the latter to police their officials better. This campaign was conducted directly in foreign capitals, through private organizations like Transparency International, and in multilateral organizations such as the Inter-American Development Bank and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

That campaign, fueled by American leadership, is having results. In November 1997, the OECD's 29 member states—virtually all the world's developed economies—plus Argentina, Brazil, and Chile adopted the Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions. In the last several years, country after country has criminalized bribery of foreign officials and ended the tax deductibility of what had once been considered a normal business expense. International conferences about corruption are frequent, and the issue is high on the agenda of most multilateral institutions. Progress is visible. Calls for repeal of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, once common, are now rare. The business community has come to realize that the proper way to level the playing field is to raise the business practices of our competitors to our level, not to descend to theirs.

But this lesson has not been applied to the sanctions issue, where American companies pressure Congress for permission to emulate the amoral policies of their competitors. This might be a reasonable policy—for Belgium, or Switzerland, or Portugal. It is not a reasonable policy for the United States. The argument



THE ETHICS OF HUMAN CLONING

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against unilateral sanctions is an argument against American leadership and suggests that if we cannot get some sort of majority vote from other traders and investors, we must set our scruples aside. Now, it would be one thing to argue that *in the context of war* unilateral American action is unwise because it might prove too costly. Take the Persian Gulf conflict of 1991: One could have argued—many people did—that if the United States were unable to assemble a coalition, it should not try to force Iraq out of Kuwait, because American casualties would be too high. In fact, a solo American effort would have been feasible and would have cost few casualties. But such an argument has moral weight because, in the context of war, the price we pay for world leadership may be measured in blood.

In the sanctions context, the argument against unilateral action is far less weighty because only money is at stake. On one side of the equation are the profits of various corporations and their shareholders and, no doubt, the jobs of some Americans. On the other side there are important moral principles and sometimes vital security interests. Sanctions against Myanmar reflect civilized outrage at the murderous activities of its rulers. Sanctions against China, Iran, Iraq, and Libya reflect not only moral disapproval but also a sensible estimate of how their actions affect our national security.

In the case of China, it can be persuasively argued that our refusal to apply sanctions when China sold missiles and nuclear technology to Pakistan and other countries is what led India to conduct its nuclear tests, which in turn led to the Pakistani tests and considerable heightening of tension on the Subcontinent. The issue is whether foreign policy should be *driven* by commercial objectives or only informed by them. With China, the commercial stakes may be high, but the security stakes are higher still.

The principle that American leadership must transcend American commercial interests would be a great deal clearer if the current administration behaved as if it were true, or more precisely, behaved that way consistently. The secretary of state on occasion touts our role as the "indispensable nation" that must lead the world. On other occasions, the administration seems to share the "business first" perspective. Since no administration will admit that it is simply ignoring human-rights issues in order to promote trade, an ideology is concocted to defend this position. Secretary Albright explained this as well at Catholic University:

> It is in our interest, and it is essential to our own identity, for America to promote religious freedom and human rights. But if we are to be effective in defending the values we cherish, we must also take into account the perspectives and values of others. We must recognize that our relations with the world are not fully encompassed by any single issue or set of issues. And we must do all we can to ensure that the world's attention is focused on the principles we embrace, not diverted by the methods we use.

This formulation is capacious enough to tolerate just about anything. How should American foreign and human-rights policy "take into account the perspectives and values" of China's Communist rulers, or of Saddam Hussein, or of Muammar Qaddafi? And given that our friends around the globe are almost always far more reluctant than we to use sanctions against human-rights violators, to insist that we avoid squabbles over methods and achieve unanimity of approach would seem to preclude effective action.

The current campaign against economic sanctions does not argue straightforwardly that the business of America is business, or that moral concerns have no place in U.S. foreign policy. Presumably, the authors of the campaign realize that these arguments simply would not sell; it would be a risky business decision to assume, for instance, that American Christians are indifferent to the treatment of their co-religionists overseas, or that Americans cannot be moved by abuses they may see tomorrow on CNN. So the product line the business lobbies are offering features human rights as the true goal of trade and investment. Economic sanctions are usually (and unilateral sanctions are always) ineffective in *human-rights terms*, they now claim, and the true champions of human rights are out there selling tractors and jets and telephones (and occasionally plans for missiles).

These claims have a more troubling aspect. Presumably corporate spokesmen make the human-rights argument because they feel they must. They know that Americans want to believe their foreign policy is moral. By claiming that commerce is a form of human-rights activity, by using the term "political engagement" to describe not political pressure but trade and investment, they are stealing the language of the human-rights movement. By demeaning the potential impact of unilateral American action, they are undercutting American leadership and the American people's understanding of why it is needed. This not only hurts U.S. human-rights policy but creates a far greater danger for U.S. foreign policy as a whole.

For the business of America at the close of this century is not business; it is leadership, in the search for

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security and peace as well as for prosperity. Successful leadership requires prudence in strategy and tactics and in the use of resources. Isolating China or any other country that runs afoul of legislation regarding such matters as human-rights abuses and arms sales is not a policy. It is at best a *tool* of policy, and like most tools it will sometimes be useful and sometimes not. The more basic issue is whether the United States will be able to pursue its own foreign policies—including its policies of promoting human rights and democracy, and combating nuclear proliferation and missile sales—with all the available tools. If we must wait for the consent of all other trading nations before employing economic sanctions as a policy tool, or must refrain from using sanctions whenever the short-term interest of an American exporter is harmed, that tool has in effect been discarded. We are then left with only one choice, words or war.

The corporate campaign against economic sanctions marshals many cogent arguments. But we must be clear: Leadership in the search for peace and in support of human rights is not the same thing as engagement through commerce. Leadership imposes costs, and Americans have reluctantly but determinedly paid them throughout this century. Perhaps in the next century we will refuse to do so; perhaps, with a century of wars behind us, we now seek only profit. If so, if we now choose doing business over leading the world, let us at least be honest about it. Let us not delude ourselves with propaganda about a "political engagement" whose success is measured in sales rather than in security or peace. ♦

THE BETSY

By Tucker Carlson

Seneca Falls, New York

It is around lunch time one weekday in mid-July, and Betsy McCaughey Ross, the lieutenant governor of New York, is addressing a rally sponsored by the National Organization for Women in the tiny upstate town of Seneca Falls. Ross has spent much of her speech emphasizing her commitment to legal abortion—"the right to choose," says the former constitutional scholar, "is the most fundamental right of all"—and is finishing up her remarks with an appeal to female solidarity. Thanks to the fact that men control Congress, Ross explains, health insurers will soon be required to cover the cost of Viagra, but not of contraceptives. It takes a second for the news to sink in, then the crowd erupts in howls of outrage.

As it turns out, Ross is wrong (it is the Clinton administration, not Congress, that has sought to mandate Viagra coverage), but her listeners, a couple of hundred feminists gathered in a concrete square grandly named the Women's Rights National Historic Park, don't seem to notice, and Ross continues. "Just imagine," she says, "a Congress dominated by *women*, barring *men* from access to Viagra." Many in the audience leap to their feet, waving signs and cheering. "Well," Ross yells, "make it happen!"

Tucker Carlson is a staff writer for THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

Even in a Democratic primary in New York, it's unusual to hear a candidate openly woo the pro-impotence vote, though somehow it's not surprising when Betsy Ross does it. Five years ago, Ross was an obscure conservative academic with a think-tank job. A couple of articles in the *New Republic* later, she became one of the best-known critics of the Clinton health-care plan. Shortly after, she was chosen by Republican gubernatorial candidate George Pataki to be his running mate. Last fall, Ross switched parties, and she is now competing against three other Democrats for the chance to challenge Pataki in the fall. You might expect New York Republicans to feel angry and betrayed by Ross's defection to the other party. But they don't appear to. Instead they seem relieved.

Ross began alienating fellow Republicans almost immediately after joining the Pataki ticket in 1994. Less than a month before the election, for instance, Ross met with Sen. Al D'Amato at the 21 Club in Manhattan. In conversation, D'Amato jokingly explained how the Pataki campaign might win the support of the city's mayor. "I've got the way to get Giuliani on our side," D'Amato told Ross. "You'll make him an offer he can't refuse." Chances are, D'Amato did not intend the remark as a sexist slur, though that is how McCaughey apparently characterized it later to reporters. D'Amato, who was Pataki's

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political mentor and most powerful supporter, was forced to make a humiliating apology.

It got worse from there. Ross publicly criticized Pataki's early-education and medical-spending initiatives. A year into the job, she began raising money for her own reelection fund. In January 1996, she created a minor scandal when she grabbed attention by ignoring her assigned seat and standing behind the governor for the duration of his 58-minute televised State of the State speech. Two months later, Pataki eliminated Ross's security detail, claiming she had used her bodyguards for personal errands. Ross responded by accusing Pataki of putting her life in danger. Soon after, Ross implied that the governor had tapped her office phone.

Meanwhile, Ross's increasingly odd behavior became a staple of the tabloid gossip pages. At one point, Ross found herself at the wrong end of a $5 million civil suit brought by a former housekeeper who claimed the lieutenant governor had threatened to kill her during a dispute over rearranging furniture. "She's flaky, genuinely flaky," says a former colleague. "She does strange things."

Strangest of all, perhaps, Ross began to make statements that indicated she had no idea why she had been chosen as Pataki's running mate. "The governor and I were elected together, and I owe the people of this state my best efforts," she told one reporter in apparent seriousness. Pataki, who had added Ross to the ticket merely as insurance against the gender gap, seemed confused by Ross's delusions of relevance.

Pataki should have consulted former governor Hugh Carey. In 1974, Carey, also hoping to draw female voters, chose Mary Anne Krupsak to be his lieutenant governor. After the election, Krupsak, a state senator and the first woman elected to statewide office in New York, claimed to be shocked to discover that her new job was largely ceremonial. Within months, she was publicly accusing her own administration of sexism. Krupsak spent the next several years making life difficult for Carey before leaving the reservation entirely and challenging him in the Democratic primary.

Krupsak lost the election, a fact from which Pataki supporters draw some comfort. But Republicans would be foolish to ignore the Ross campaign. For one thing, Ross's years in statewide office have made her famous in New York; she now has far higher name recognition than any of her three Democratic primary opponents. For another, despite her quirks, Ross has the discipline and focus campaign politics requires. This winter, Ross's chartered campaign plane lost power and crashed during take-off in Buffalo. Though her aides downplayed the incident, FAA investigators later expressed amazement that no one had been killed. Within an hour of impact, Ross had hired a car and was off to her next appearance.

Kent Lemon

Betsy McCaughey Ross

No one accuses Ross of not working hard. And, for someone once immersed in academic political theory (her journalism from the early 1990s includes an article entitled, "Democracy at Risk: The Dangerous Flaws in the Electoral College"), she has proved remarkably willing to descend into the sort of crude interest-group pandering that wins New York primaries. Earlier this year, Ross made a pilgrimage to Harlem to kiss the ring of race-baiter Al Sharpton, at the headquarters of his National Action Network. According to an editorial in the *Amsterdam News*, Ross's suck-up to Sharpton made for a "sensational" performance. Others saw it as evidence that things were truly falling apart. "What this election suggests is the utter intellectual collapse of the Democratic Party in New York State," says Fred Siegel, a senior fellow at the Progressive Policy Institute who has known Ross for years.

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Siegel has a point, though if Ross is helping to destroy the Democratic party, many of the state's Democratic primary voters don't seem to care. Back in Seneca Falls, Ross has finished her speech and has returned to her seat on the stage. An official from NOW is drawing the rally to a close, and as she ends the event, she instructs the crowd to engage in an act of collective affirmation. Turn to the person next to you, she says, and speak these words: "You are strong. You are beautiful. You are powerful. *You* can change the world."

Ross is seated between NOW veterans Patricia Ireland and Eleanor Smeal, both of whom look slightly embarrassed. Ross, on the other hand, seems positively excited. Decked out in a double strand of grape-sized pearls, a diamond-studded gold watch, and expensive-looking patent leather cap-toed pumps, Ross looks every bit the socially conscious Junior Leaguer. Then the final chant begins: "What do we want? Equality! When do we want it? Now!" Ross is still giggling and clapping her hands when the chorus ends.

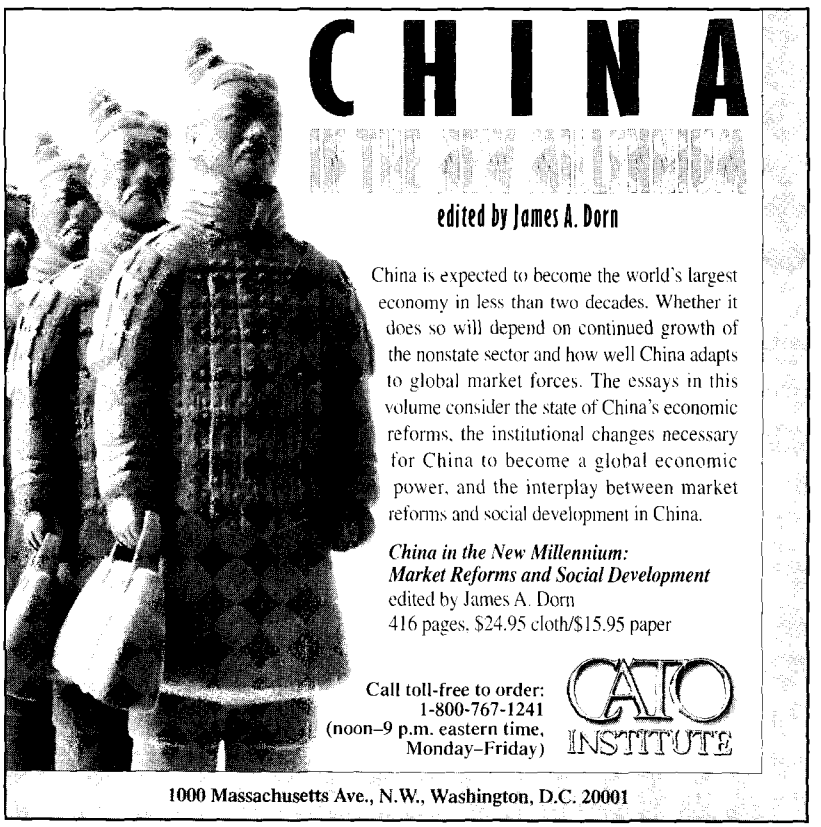
Embarrassing? Sure. Effective? Ask Sandy Rapp, a lesbian folk singer from Long Island who has seen Ross speak five times. Rapp says she has been a radical feminist activist for "many, many years" ("I sang at Bella Abzug's funeral," she boasts), so she might be forgiven for regarding Ross—who until recently opposed affirmative action and who has never even voted for a Democrat for president—with some skepticism. But she doesn't. "I think she's wonderful," says Rapp. Among radical feminists like herself, Rapp says, Ross "is beloved."

Yolanda Clark agrees. Clark, treasurer for the Texas chapter of NOW, has seen Ross speak twice and thinks the lieutenant governor should run for national office as soon as possible. "She's actually participated in the struggle," Clark says with some passion. "She's been discriminated against. Unlike Clarence Thomas."

The struggle? It is true that Ross grew up working class, the daughter of a janitor at a nail-clipper factory. On the other hand, she graduated from Vassar and Columbia, lives on the Upper East Side, and has been married twice to rich businessmen. Indeed, it is her present husband, investor Wilbur L. Ross Jr., who is paying for her current campaign to limit the patriarchy's access to Viagra. (Of the $2.4 million Ross's campaign had raised by the last disclosure period, Wilbur Ross, who was described in a *New York Times* headline as "The Lovestruck Midas Behind the Candidate," donated $2.25 million.) How do facts like these play at a feminist rally? "I don't know a whole, whole lot about her background," Clark admits. "I've just heard some of the stories in her speeches."

If she keeps telling the right stories, Ross has a good chance of becoming the next Democratic nominee for governor. Ross's chief rival is Peter Vallone, a longtime Queens politico who is speaker of the New York City Council. Vallone's poll numbers have risen lately—doubtless thanks to a well-publicized feud he has been having with New York Yankees owner George Steinbrenner—and at the moment he is beating Ross by around 10 points. But Vallone is not a natural candidate for the kind of hard-edged ideological voters who are apt to decide the race. Turnout is expected to be unusually low, and Vallone—an old-school, centrist Democrat who goes to mass daily and once described the pope as a personal "hero"—probably won't be the first choice of many NOW activists.

Needless to say, the thought of Betsy Ross winning



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the primary drives many responsible New York Democrats crazy. "Not having paid your dues," growls one, "*and* switching parties *and* having a fat-cat husband—*and* having a chance to win? Add it all up and it rankles." For Republicans, meanwhile, the Betsy Ross Show has become a lot more satisfying to watch. Come November, Ross almost certainly won't be governor of New York. But she will still be a Democrat. ♦

THE SOLUTION IN KOSOVO: MILOSEVIC MUST GO

By Stefan Halper

Pristina, Kosovo

IN WASHINGTON, RICHARD HOLBROOKE is known as an "in and out guy," a Wall Street dealmaker short on history, long on tactics. Here in Kosovo, where Washington believes the wildfire insurgency led by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) could trigger another Balkan war, Holbrooke, architect of the Dayton Accords, is again the point man. He spent late June and early July shuttling among the four main parties to the conflict: Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic; longtime Kosovar leader Ibrahim Rugova, committed to nonviolence; Adem Demaci, a charismatic, Mandela-like Kosovar leader willing to use force; and the KLA, which has some 4,000 fighters in the field against the Serbs. Not surprisingly, Holbrooke reports no progress.

As recently as two months ago, Washington might have forestalled the crisis, whose victims now litter the villages and cornfields of Kosovo, the Serbian province where the 92 percent Albanian majority is rebelling against Belgrade. But events on the ground have outpaced diplomacy, and a spicy animus between Holbrooke and U.S. special envoy Robert Gelbard has made coherent policy impossible.

Washington's fecklessness has been especially marked since early June, when the United States demanded that Belgrade withdraw its security forces from Kosovo—without a parallel commitment by the KLA to cease its military operations. Washington went so far as to threaten NATO air strikes and harsher sanctions if Belgrade declined. Belgrade did decline what it saw as a preemptive surrender of Kosovo—the "cradle of Serb culture." Washington, all bark and no bite, did nothing.

Having one's bluff called in the diplomatic world is never a perfect moment. What's worse, however, is conducting a policy based on a contradiction. Serb compliance would have benefited the KLA, which Ambassador Gelbard has labeled a terrorist group, and undercut Rugova, whom Ambassador Holbrooke calls "central and indispensable to any solution."

TWO MEN IN BAGGY WOOLEN PANTS AND WHITE PEASANT SMOCKS AND CARRYING WORLD WAR I VINTAGE LEE-ENFIELD RIFLES STOPPED US.

Washington's confused and tardy response to the spiraling confrontation directly affects political developments in Belgrade and Kosovo, where events are inextricably linked. But before Washington can develop a viable policy, it must achieve an accurate assessment of the KLA, the Milosevic coalition, and American interests.

Belgrade describes the KLA as roving bandits terrorizing villagers and coercing men to join its ranks; but clearly there is more to it than that. The commander of Yugoslav forces in Kosovo, Gen. Nabusja Pavcovic, told me the insurgents control 40 percent of the province by day and all but the major cities by night. Conversation on the streets and in the cafés of Pristina reveals overwhelming popular support for the KLA, which hardens with each new Serb assault. Moreover, three U.S. journalists saw evidence of the KLA's organizational sophistication and communica-

Stefan Halper, a former White House and State Department official, writes a column from Washington.

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tions capability when we were detained at a checkpoint on a dirt road just 13 miles from Pristina on June 19.

Two men in their fifties wearing baggy woolen pants, work shoes, white peasant smocks, and Albanian skull caps and carrying World War I vintage Lee-Enfield rifles stopped us. They asked who we were, what our purpose was, and what we had seen, then called their superiors by radio-telephone. As we waited in our car at the side of the road, we realized that we were not alone. A nearby grove was cover for a tripod-mounted heavy machine-gun, and the scenic outcropping just ahead turned out to conceal a well-manned bunker.

Within minutes, four men arrived by car. They were in their thirties, carried AK-47s, and wore older army-type jackets and combat boots. After grilling the Albanian interpreter and accusing him of accepting money from us and endangering them, these men seized our cameras and tape recorders. They were concerned about the security of the site, especially their gun emplacements, and the possibility that we had recorded their questions to us. (At one point the interpreter screamed, "Tell the truth: Did you record anything? If you lie you will never see the States again.") After checking our press credentials by radio-telephone and examining our passports, our captors told us the "military police" were en route.

Soon they arrived and a third round of questioning began. Our interlocutor was a Bosnia veteran wearing new camouflage and boots, armed with a new Kalashnikov and a Glock pistol. As all this was going on out in the open near the road, cars driven by villagers friendly to the fighters continuously passed. The KLA made no attempt to hide, nor was there any sign of the Serb police or military. The episode ended with the confiscation of our film and tape, and we were escorted out of the area with firm instructions not to return.

Our experience belies the State Department's claim that the KLA is unstructured and without leadership. Control of the ground, three levels of authority connected by phone, a credentials check with some central authority, and a policy for dealing with foreign press were all in evidence. Clearly, Washington needs better information about the insurgency. More to the point, a solution that does not accept many of the KLA's goals may be impossible. Which brings us back to Richard Holbrooke, who is looking for Mr. Goodbar in all the wrong places. A solution to this crisis must begin in Kosovo, not Belgrade.

Central to Washington's inability to untie this Balkan knot is the relationship between Holbrooke and Milosevic. Holbrooke is transfixed, some say mesmerized, by the Serbian president. At one point in his recent book *To End a War,* Holbrooke writes that he "bonded with the godfather."

Milosevic, to be sure, is a charismatic leader, a brilliant tactician, a Balkan Houdini who has presided over the dismemberment of Yugoslavia and survived. But Holbrooke's myopia has caused Washington to overlook critical policy options. Agile though he may

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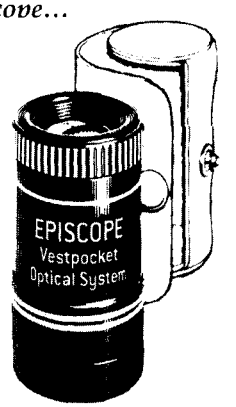

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be, Milosevic perches atop a fragile coalition, whose tensions the West has not properly exploited. Kosovo poses a pivotal danger for Milosevic. Anger is growing among members of the Serbian police and Yugoslav military, some intellectuals, and rural Serbian nationalists, who see that their president, having failed to achieve a "greater Serbia" in Bosnia and Croatia, now is about to lose Kosovo. Sonja Biserko, director of the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, told me, "Milosevic is blamed for the political chaos, economic disaster, and moral decline. He will be the scapegoat" if the Kosovo crisis ends badly.

Milosevic's chauvinism carries costs. It has alienated important parts of Serbian society. The unions, protesting plant closures, are suspicious of the state. Workers fear that the social safety net has disappeared and that with few job openings in the private sector, their families may suffer. The middle class, stripped of creature comforts and even necessities, waits for reforms that are trumpeted but never come. One senior Serbian official confided the crushing effect of the government-imposed bank closures in which he lost his personal savings, cashiering his dream of a new home with his new wife, travel, and a nest egg for old age. Many see the private sector as a carnival of corruption, where monopoly reigns and politicians profit by sitting on the boards of companies they helped to privatize. Landlords and tenants both complain that there is no rule of law. Court judgments take an average one to three years and have little chance of enforcement.

Not surprisingly, in this miasma of frustration, many long for a return to normalcy. And in Belgrade, opinion is increasingly war-averse. It is not just in the fashionable Terazilje cafés that dwindling numbers consider Kosovo worth the loss of Serb life. In late June, hundreds of conscripts' mothers demonstrated at the barracks in Pristina seeking to have their children reassigned.

All the same, the Serb nationalists have no shortage of sympathizers. Powerful intellectual elites—the Union of Writers, the Orthodox Church—see a more vigorous nationalism as a cure for the public's anomie. This is not lost on Milosevic's coalition partner and deputy, Vojislav Seselj, a radical nationalist and former paramilitary chief with a reputation for brutality in Bosnia. While disapproving of Seselj, democratic opposition leader Vesna Pesic says he is "a different kind of Serb, very decisive, knows the national interest. He is anti-liberal but supports the private sector, and nationalists go to him when they are fed up with Milosevic."

Some Western diplomats believe that if Milosevic fails in Kosovo, Seselj will resign and run for president on a wave of nationalist sentiment that could oust the government. Other likely candidates for president in the election due in or before 2000 are President Milo Djukanovic of Montenegro and former Belgrade mayor Zoran Djinjic. Both are market-oriented democrats who, despite their limitations, have support in Western capitals. Up to this point, however, rapidly shifting events and Seselj's mercurial appeal have prevented either from making a strong impression on the voters or projecting a persuasive platform.

All of this has brought Yugoslavia to the brink of chaos—and the facile Milosevic may be unable to halt its further slide, as his grip on Serbia's security apparatus weakens, partly because of his continuing failure in Kosovo.

On June 19, I accompanied Gen. Pavcovic to southeastern Kosovo. The army's responsibility, he said, is Kosovo's border with Albania and Macedonia, not the interior. In village after village near Decani and Djakovica, houses had been destroyed by shelling and fire. The army "had nothing to do with this," Pavcovic told me. "This is [Serbian Special] Police work." But when I asked why the police didn't pursue KLA snipers in a nearby village, he shrugged and held up his hands. His frustration was palpable.

Gen. Pavcovic told me that the movement of arms and materiel into Kosovo began in earnest six or seven months ago "with the help of certain countries." Most of the arms are Chinese, seized from armories in Albania when the government fell last year; some are from Croatia and Bosnia. Uniforms made in Germany, Britain, and Norway have been found. Financing comes from the "Albanian government in exile," which collects money for a fund called "The Homeland Is Calling" and licenses people to buy arms and transport them to Albania. There, fighters are trained and infiltrated into Kosovo by countless routes known as Europe's Ho Chi-Minh Trail.

Gen. Pavcovic said 704 all-Albanian villages in Kosovo (about half of the province's villages) are defended by KLA fighters. He claimed that many of these fighters are "mercenaries who look like Mujahideen." KLA operations in Kosovo are planned and controlled from a headquarters in Malisevo, part way between Pristina and Pec, in the "liberated area." Strategic headquarters is across the border in Albania.

The general underscored his fear that the West sees the Yugoslav army in Kosovo as part of the problem—when actually it must be part of the solution. He said, "Considering the confusion, the army must be avail-

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able to provide stability so that politics can solve the issue." Left unstated was what role, if any, Milosevic would play in a solution.

As for the police, back in June some 200 Serbian policemen publicly refused to serve in Kosovo, shocking Belgrade. What has so far escaped the attention of the foreign media, however, is the growing frustration among the police already in Kosovo. Speaking on background, a member of the Serbian Special Police stationed there expressed anger over disorganization, poor equipment, and lack of support. When his unit was deployed this spring, he said,

> the commander stressed that Kosovo was in a state of war and that the flak jackets given us should be used when entering Kosovo as protection for the windows on our buses. Only when arriving in Djakovica did we notice that the flak jackets were made in 1991 and 1992 and the expiration date was five years. Furthermore, an instruction written on them said they served as protection against small firearms. However, everybody knows now the [KLA] prefers using rifles and shoulder-held rocket launchers. It is needless to say we were revolted. . . . In the village where we had been sent there was not a single Serb left. Only the local Roma [Gypsies] were ready to cooperate, because the [KLA had requisitioned] their horses to transport ammunition from Albania. [Although] this information reached the responsible offices in Djakovica, nothing was ever done about it. [KLA] threats against the Roma eventually came true as two Roma were killed. . . . Almost all of the actions we took were thwarted. . . . We began to suspect that local policemen were passing information to the Albanians. A few days before my return to Belgrade, we moved to the army barracks. . . . Our impression was that there was no cooperation between the police and the army. We were alone.

Kent Lemon

Slobodan Milosevic

Given such clear evidence of Serb vulnerability and KLA strength, the disconnect between the situation on the ground and the policies advanced by Holbrooke, Gelbard, and others in Western capitals is striking. Washington's failure to modify its policy to reflect the weakened position of Ibrahim Rugova, for example, and its flirtation with Demaci consumed precious time. Meanwhile, in Kosovo, the equation was changing fundamentally.

As recently as early June, a combination of NATO strikes and sanctions might have forced Milosevic to make concessions. But the administration dithered. For fear of criticism, it did not follow up. Today, the insurgents effectively control Kosovo. Moreover, theirs is a broad-based movement with a cohesive ideology, widely accepted objectives, and even its own contemporary heroes. So that any thought Belgrade or NATO might have of resolving the crisis with an offer to restore Kosovo's autonomy is no longer viable. With material support from Albania, Macedonia, and elsewhere and a demonstrated military capability, the KLA may be able to sustain itself indefinitely. An independent Kosovo is thus possible, perhaps likely.

At this point, there are no good options. The KLA's military success has raised its aspirations beyond autonomy or even independence. On July 11, KLA spokesman Jakup Krasniqi said in Pristina that his group is fighting for "the liberation of all occupied Albanian territories and for their unification with Albania."

If the KLA achieves its objective, Balkan stability will be directly threatened. Accordingly, if NATO has a role, it is to preserve the present borders between Albania, Macedonia, and Kosovo. Bear in mind that the Kosovars themselves are far from united in the desire to join with their impoverished cousins in northern Albania and Macedonia; they view the prospect rather as South Koreans see unification with the North.

But no NATO or U.S. policy will work if it is based on an infatuation with Milosevic. Until now, the assumption that Milosevic is key to preserving Balkan stability has hamstrung the administration. In fact, the Belgrade regime is increasingly fragile. While an independent Kosovo would carry risks, an effective NATO deployment could minimize them. And if Kosovo's independence hastened Milosevic's departure, Serbia as well as Kosovo might achieve a newfound freedom in which to rebuild. ♦

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Profiles in Corruption

Warren G. Harding and William J. Clinton—and Why Calvin Coolidge Isn't Like Them

By David Frum

For the last six years, Americans have been debating the question of how much character counts in a president—and, thus far, the people who answer "not much" seem to be winning. Bill Clinton needs to hold on only two more years to finish his presidency and get safely out of town.

But history has a way of undoing, in the long run, all such seeming triumphs. That is perhaps the most important lesson of two new biographies of figures in the 1920 presidential election: *Coolidge* by Robert Sobel and *Florence Harding* by Carl Sferrazza Anthony.

Two years after the end of the First World War, the Democrats James Cox and Franklin Roosevelt suffered the most crushing defeat in American history, garnering only 35 percent of the vote. The victorious Republican ticket yoked, as candidate for vice president, Calvin Coolidge—one of the most upright men ever to serve in the White House—with Warren Gamaliel Harding—one of the most lax and corrupt.

In a recent issue of the *Washington Post*, Carl Anthony noted the striking parallels between Harding and Clinton. During Harding's presidency,

> the scandals never seemed to end. There was the strange suicide of an administration official, made even more mysterious by a note that disappeared. Then came an investigation into payoffs and cover-ups connected to a notorious land deal. The president's friends launched smear campaigns against his perceived foes. Dossiers were compiled, private eyes and snitches deployed. Affidavits were drafted in which various women denied liaisons with the president. Jobs were arranged to keep people quiet.

Through all the Harding scandals, Anthony observes, "a steel-willed first lady kept the press at bay and did whatever was necessary to defend her husband's reputation—even if it meant destroying evidence."

Indeed, the parallels go far beyond those that Anthony mentions. Scandal-plagued administrations have a logic and a grammar of their own. A president has a vice. It's not necessarily such a serious vice, but it's politically dangerous. It needs to be covered up, generating secrets and deceit. (Both Florence Harding and Hillary Clinton found themselves waging war against the staff of the executive mansion, whom they suspected of snooping.) Some of the people with damaging knowledge about the president are loyalists, but others are not, and they must be either bribed or bullied into silence. That costs money, and raising it in turn generates new secrets and new lies.

Carl Sferrazza Anthony
Florence Harding
The First Lady, the Jazz Age, and the Death of America's Most Scandalous President
Morrow, 645 pp., $30

Robert Sobel
Coolidge
An American Enigma
Regnery, 462 pp., $34.95

"Harding was not a bad man," Alice Roosevelt Longworth once declared. "He was just a slob." Good-natured, weak, and carnal, he knew his limitations: "I am unfit for this place," he unhappily confided, "and never should have come here." He blamed his wife for removing him from the Senate and inflicting the presidency on him. He was right: Florence Kling Harding deserves the title of the fiercest and most ambitious first lady.

She was the first president's wife able to vote for her husband in a national election, the first to ride in an airplane, the first to give speeches in public, and the only one ever to bear a child out of marriage. She rejected traditional feminine roles more adamantly than any other first lady—surrendering her son to her parents, showing little affection for her grandchildren, and disdaining domesticity.

Like Hillary Clinton, she exerted a powerful influence on her husband's appointments, and the people who benefited from her favor were unusually prone to scandal and trouble. Like Hillary Clinton, too, Florence Harding employed psychics to commune with the spirit world. It was Florence Harding who managed the family's money and who was responsible for such transactions as the sale of their Washington mansion for an above-market price. And it was Florence Harding who presided over the elaborate apparatus of deceit, payoff, and intimidation necessary to keep Harding's secrets.

The daughter of the richest man in Marion, Ohio, Florence Kling resented her domineering father and

David Frum is a contributing editor to The Weekly Standard.

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rebelled by running off with the ne'er-do-well son of one of his many enemies. She would later marry and then divorce the man, but Carl Anthony proves that their child was born before the marriage was formalized.

After the divorce, Florence supported herself by teaching piano, and soon came to meet Warren Harding, five years her junior, an ambitious newspaper editor and already an avid womanizer. Harding seems not to have been much attracted to Florence, but he recognized her abilities and never had the strength to say no to anything, even marriage. The wedding scandalized her family as much as her previous elopement—a persistent rumor had it that the Hardings were partly black—but Florence was undaunted. Under her management, Harding's newspaper, the *Marion Star*, prospered, and it was very largely thanks to her that Harding arrived in Washington an affluent man.

By then, Harding had been conducting extramarital affairs for twenty years, his longest and most passionate with Carrie Phillips, the wife of his best friend. Harding had the bad habit of writing torrid letters and erotic poems to his woman of the moment. In 1917, while he was in the Senate, the strongly pro-German Mrs. Phillips tried to use her collection of letters to blackmail Harding into opposing entry into the war. Enough of the old passion lingered that he was able to talk her out of it. But by the time of his presidential run in 1920, such blandishments no longer worked, and Harding's campaign managers had to put together a secret fund to pay off Mrs. Phillips—and other women as well.

The man in charge of the pay-offs, Harry Daugherty, had been responsible for securing Harding's nomination in the famous smoke-filled room in Chicago's Blackstone Hotel. For the Republican party, still divided by the 1912 split between Roosevelt and Taft, Harding was an acceptable compromise. The party bosses picked much of Harding's cabinet and on the whole did an excellent job: Charles Evans Hughes as secretary of state, Andrew Mellon as secretary of the treasury, and Herbert Hoover as secretary of commerce. But Harding chose some of his cabinet too, and there his troubles began. He put Daugherty in the Justice department, gave New Mexico senator Albert Fall the Interior, and made Charles Forbes, a special favorite of Florence's, the first chief of the new Veterans' Bureau.

Library of Congress / Corbis

Florence to his left, younger women to his right, Harding watches a horse show in 1923.

Harding's admirers would later say that he was betrayed by his friends. But it's hard to believe he had no inkling about Daugherty, Fall, and Forbes. He had known the first two for years, and the truth about Forbes quickly became available. Even Florence Harding's psychic knew it.

In the early 1920s, it was generally believed that the world was running out of oil and that America's reserves ought to be hoarded for military use. Fall took bribes from oilmen, got both the Wyoming oil field known as Teapot Dome and California's Elk Hills transferred from the Navy, and then leased them out. Meanwhile, Florence's courtier Forbes was embezzling millions in hospital-construction funds and medical supplies, and Daugherty was perverting the administration of justice on an unmatched scale.

Anthony does a good job of describing these abuses. But his book is marred by an irritatingly twittery style and a troubling eagerness to make excuses:

> Despite Harding's instituting the government's Bureau of the Budget and sponsoring America's first international disarmament conference, his progressive views on racial inequality and fighting religious intolerance, his support of programs for better women's health, his promotion of new American technological industries like moving-picture shows, air travel, radio and the automobile, his successful demand to industry that they institute a fair eight-hour day, Warren G. Harding's name would always be recalled by those oil leases.

But the oil leases were only the start. Harding liked drinking—liked it quite a lot—and that was a problem, since alcohol had been outlawed in 1919. He had campaigned in 1920 as a moderate supporter of Prohibition, but he served whiskey at his White House poker parties and

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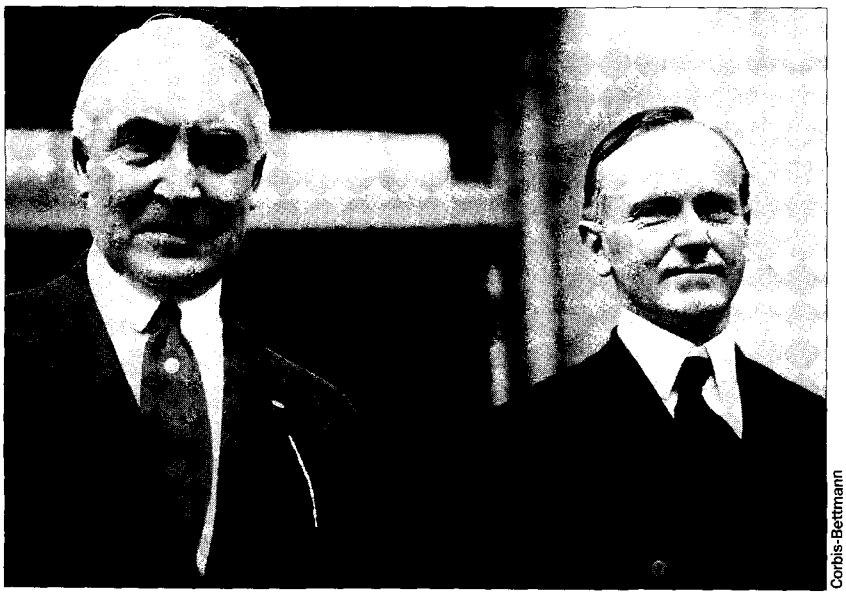
boozed it up in houses owned by his friends. At one of these drinking sessions, a bevy of prostitutes was brought in and a girl was killed by a thrown bottle. But when her brother tried to blackmail the president, Harding's cronies at the precursor to the FBI, the Bureau of Investigation, confined him to St. Elizabeths mental hospital.

A shadowy figure named Jess Smith was in charge of protecting Harding's secrets. Sharing a house with Attorney General Daugherty—Anthony contends the two were homosexual lovers—Smith worked closely with the new head of the Bureau of Investigation, a private investigator named Billy Burns. Burns kept his old detective agency active while on government payroll, and it was his agency's employees who did most of the dirty work of threatening women and roughing up those who pried into Harding's affairs. The Ambrose Evans-Pritchard of the day was a college professor named William Estabrook Chancellor, who wrote a book documenting Harding's love affairs, charging him with financial wrongdoing, and repeating the old rumor of black ancestry. Thanks to Smith and Burns, Chancellor—who narrowly escaped being put into St. Elizabeths too—was spied upon and beaten, his mail illegally opened and copies of his book confiscated.

Smith was, if possible, even closer to the Hardings than he was to Daugherty. He called Florence Harding "Ma" and controlled the secret blackmail fund for paying off Harding's women. Anthony suggests that Smith also used the money to mollify Florence when she got wind of some particularly humiliating new affair. And after the election, Smith used his fabulous connections to make himself a fortune, selling protection to bootleggers and pocketing tens of thousands of dollars from the sale of German property impounded during the war. When he died under suspicious circumstances in 1923, the death looked like suicide but was widely believed to be murder—a view that Anthony seems to endorse.

Harding may not have been a bad man, but the people around him—and above all, his deeply complicitous wife—were nonetheless obliged to do bad things to protect him from his weaknesses. It's hard work keeping a president's secrets (including, in Harding's case, an illegitimate child by an adoring admirer thirty years his junior), and harsh and expensive methods must often be used and then concealed.



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The 1920 Republican Ticket: Warren Harding and Calvin Coolidge

If Harding seems like a figure from today's headlines, Calvin Coolidge looks as remote as a Civil War tintype. Coolidge won the campaign of 1924 not so much because of his policies—though those seem increasingly attractive—as because of his personality. When Coolidge died in 1933 at the age of sixty-one, Al Smith, the Democratic nominee of 1928, declared that he belonged "in the class of presidents who were distinguished for character more than for heroic achievement. His great task was to restore the dignity and prestige of the presidency when it had reached the lowest ebb in our history, and to afford, in a time of extravagance and waste, a shining public example of the simple and homely virtues which came down to him from his New England ancestors."

History has confirmed Smith's evaluation of the "low ebb" of Harding, but curiously it has not agreed with him about Coolidge. Although Coolidge was an immensely popular president in his day—he would almost certainly have won reelection in 1928 had he run—his reputation began to dwindle as soon as he left office: When she heard of Coolidge's death, Alice Roosevelt mocked, "How could they tell?" In Arthur Schlesinger Jr.'s famous 1962 poll of historians, Coolidge ranked above only Grant, Harding, Buchanan, and Pierce.

His reputation got a little boost in 1982 when Thomas Silver published *Coolidge and the Historians*, criticizing the profession for its Democratic partisanship. But in the 1996 version of Schlesinger's poll, Coolidge had risen merely to "low average." Such assessments have real influence on casual students. A recent popular history, *Star-Spangled Men: America's Ten Worst Presidents*, follows the old convention and ranks Coolidge the

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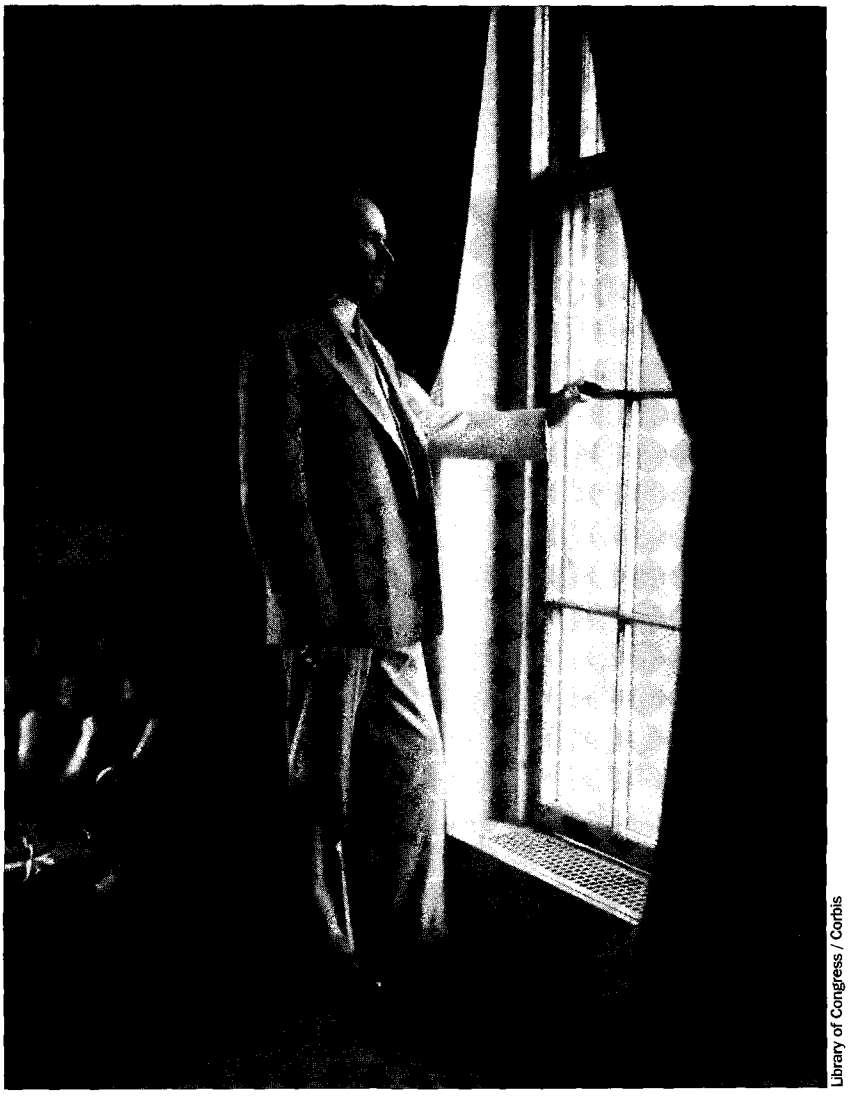

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A pensive Coolidge stares from a White House window.

sixth-worst president, below Carter, Taft, and Benjamin Harrison. It's a strange assessment of a man who achieved every one of his domestic political goals and presided over five of the most peaceful and prosperous years in American history.

Or maybe it's not so strange. Character is something normally taken for granted in presidents. It's only when memories of presidential wrongdoing are fresh that we fully appreciate how important it is.

Coolidge was born on July 4, 1872, in Plymouth, Vermont. The Coolidges were prosperous by local standards, although by any other standard they lived a hard, frugal life. Coolidge was visiting his father when he got the news in the early morning hours of August 3, 1923, that Harding had died, and he took the oath of office from his father, the town notary, in the parlor of the house in which he had grown up. It had neither a telephone, nor electricity, nor plumbing, nor any heating except an old wood stove.

Robert Sobel wryly notes—in one of the many astute observations in his graceful, intelligent, and sympathetic biography—that Coolidge was lucky in his timing: Had Harding died a day later, the press would have found Calvin Coolidge not in his father's rustic cabin but at the mansion of a rich friend. But luck is something people often observe in Coolidge. H. L. Mencken made it the centerpiece of his famous essay on the president, relating the story of a Boston journalist's prediction at the 1920 Republican convention that Harding would have to die in office—because Calvin Coolidge "is the luckiest — in the whole world."

But Coolidge himself would have disagreed about his luck. He lost his mother when he was twelve and his only sibling, a sister, when he was eighteen. In 1920, when he was on his way to the convention, his beloved stepmother died. And in 1924, the worst blow of all: His younger son died at sixteen when a blister he developed playing tennis without socks became infected. Coolidge was always taciturn—it was a running joke that his wife taught deaf-mutes before her marriage—but only after the death of his son did he become "Silent Cal."

Perhaps these afflictions explain Coolidge's dark, mordant wit, like his famous reply, "You lose," to the woman who told him she had bet that she could extract more than two words from him, or his comment—after hearing the sermon of a visiting Baptist preacher who had refused breakfast because he was less eloquent on a full stomach—"He might as well have et."

Once, on a questionnaire asking his hobbies, Coolidge wrote, "holding office." He began running within eight years of his graduation from Amherst. He was elected to the Massachusetts legislature in 1906, and then governor in 1918. At the state level, Coolidge earned a reputation as a progressive, with a special interest in the care of the insane and public transit, but what made him a national political star was his breaking of the Boston police strike in 1919 and his celebrated reply to Samuel Gompers: "There is no right to strike against the public safety, anywhere, any time."

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The radical ferment of 1919 frightened Americans and was in large part responsible for the Democrats' dreadful defeat in 1920 after holding the presidency for the eight years of Wilson's presidency. Coolidge's participation in that defeat explains why later historians were so often venomous toward him. Even though Wilson's reputation has eroded a little (he was, after all, the most virulent segregationist to hold office since before the Civil War), it remains astonishingly high among professional historians. The only Ph.D. ever to occupy the White House, Wilson exemplifies to his fellow Ph.D.s idealistic statesmanship rising above the grubby realities of politics. As Arthur Schlesinger Jr. puts it in his *Coming of the New Deal*: "The old Wilsonians watched the New Era in indignation and contempt. They were men who had known the exaltation of idealism. They had dared to act greatly and risk greatly. They saw after 1920 a different America moved, as they conceived it, by ignoble motives."

But not even Schlesinger's flattery could equal Wilson's self-appraisal. In 1923, in his last public address, he declared, "I am not one of those that have the least anxiety about the triumph of the principles I have stood for. I have seen fools resist Providence before, and I have seen their destruction, as will come upon them again, utter destruction and contempt. That we shall prevail is as sure as that God reigns."

Wilson's sententiousness—in stark contrast to the dry self-mockery of Calvin Coolidge, who when asked his first reaction to the news that he would be president answered, "I thought I could swing it"—is now almost as badly out of style as his racism. And yet, even as Wilson's star sinks, Coolidge's has failed to rise. The slurs of the 1920s and 1930s still damage him.

In his new biography, Robert Sobel gamely sets the record straight. Coolidge was not unintelligent: His wedding present to his wife was a translation of Dante's *Inferno* he had been quietly working on for years. If he kept his mouth shut, it was because—as he told Herbert Hoover—nine-tenths of the people who come to see the president want something they should not have, and if you just stay still they eventually go away.

Neither was Coolidge lazy. Walter Lippmann had perhaps the best description:

> Mr. Coolidge's genius for inactivity is developed to a very high point. It is far from being an indolent inactivity. It is a grim, determined, alert inactivity which keeps Mr. Coolidge occupied constantly. Nobody has ever worked harder at inactivity, with such force of character, with such unremitting attention to detail, with conscientious devotion to the task. Inactivity is a political philosophy and a party program with Mr. Coolidge, and nobody should mistake his unflinching adherence to it for a soft and easy desire to let things slide.

Lippmann—then still in his Progressive phase—was unhappy about this, but at least he understood: Coolidge wanted to roll back the expansion of federal power under Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt, and he worked hard at doing it. Before World War I, the federal government spent about 3 percent of the national income, but the ratio shot up to about 20 percent in 1918 and 1919. Coolidge dragged it back down to peacetime norms and slashed taxes to match.

Coolidge was not cold. It's hard for present-day Americans, floating in a soup of sentimentality, to appreciate the depth of feeling that could be concealed by the inexpressiveness of the old Yankees. A visitor who prodded the president about his long, silent staring out the window extracted the answer, "When I look out that window, I always see my boy playing tennis on that court out there."

And Coolidge was not crass. Few remarks by an American president have ever been as misunderstood as Coolidge's line that "the business of America is business." The 1920s were caught up in a great debate over whether the exciting new medium of the day, radio, should be privately owned or controlled by the state. Progressives like Herbert Hoover favored government control and even cast yearning eyes on newspapers. They believed that insulating the media from profit and loss would make it more truthful and reliable. Coolidge rejected that view:

> There does not seem to be cause for alarm in the dual relationship of the press to the public, whereby it is on one side a purveyor of information and opinion and on the other side a purely business enterprise. Rather, it is probable that a press which maintains an intimate touch with the business currents of the nation is likely to be more reliable than it would be if it were a stranger to those influences. After all, the chief business of the American people is business.

Coolidge was wrong about international economics. He was a protectionist at a time when Europe desperately needed to export to America. But he was right about almost everything else: a tax-cutter, a defender of the independence of the press, a racial moderate (he delivered the commencement address to the graduating black students at Howard University in 1924, then a startling thing for a president to do), a dogged opponent of every scheme to extend government ownership. Even Mencken, who had so bitingly mocked Coolidge in the 1920s, eventually recanted: "If the day ever comes when Jefferson's warnings are heeded at last, and we reduce government to its simplest terms, Cal's bones, now resting inconspicuously in the Vermont granite, will come to be revered as those of a man who really did the nation some service."

The good news from Carl Anthony's *Florence Harding* is that the truth eventually comes out. The good news from Robert Sobel's *Coolidge* is that the American people can tell the dif-

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ference between an honest man and a dishonest one, and will turn against dishonesty—even in a prosperous time like 1924.

But there's bad news in these books too. Sobel's implicitly reminds us of how completely the intellectuals who have charge of American history can be blinded by their ideological prejudices. And the passages of gush that mar Anthony's otherwise fascinating book should warn us that power and glamour can induce the suspension of moral judgment even in someone who knows all the facts. In other words, character counts—but sadly only over the long run and, even then, not for everyone. ♦

PRESIDENTIAL FICTION

A New Novel Has Fun with Bill and Hillary

By Dick Morris

The only thing that is deliberately fictional about Charles McCarry's new political thriller *Lucky Bastard* is his disclaimer that the book is "a work of imagination in which no character is based on anyone who ever lived." It is, in fact, a fantasy about Bill and Hillary Clinton—who, in McCarry's fictional account, were once Russian spies and who are now, after the fall of the Soviet Union, agents for Red China. The book is basically a right-wing equivalent of Joe Klein's anonymously published *Primary Colors* and about as blatantly biographical.

Charles McCarry
Lucky Bastard
Random House, 384 pp., $24.95

Bill Clinton appears as Jack Adams, the draft-dodging Democratic governor of Ohio and former state attorney general, who wins the presidency and who secretly believes he's John F. Kennedy's bastard son—a sort of American, male, would-be Anastasia claiming royal ancestry. Hillary Clinton appears as Morgan, his wife—and also his handler for an offshoot of the KGB run by a fisher of men, codenamed "Peter," who so controls the pair that they won't have sex together without his approval.

The Soviets provide money, laundered through a savings and loan Jack and Morgan buy. They provide women for Jack and men for Morgan. And once the Soviets go broke, the Chinese pick up Jack's tab and funnel him money to pay for his run at the presidency. All that is missing is McCarry's explanation of the secret causes of the Buddhist temple donations and the White House coffees.

The book's pacing and style are vintage espionage novel—with dead drops and people who drop dead. Whenever the action lags, bizarre sex scenes rescue it. McCarry, formerly an intelligence agent, does a presumably better job with the espionage than with the politics: He focuses on Jack's college days with Morgan and hyperactive sex life, and he seems to lose interest in the narrative by the time Jack runs for president, giving the campaign only a few dozen pages at the end of what increasingly becomes a porn novel. The book is best recommended as psychotherapy for any right-winger not satisfied by Kenneth Starr: If you believe in UFOs, the Trilateral Commission conspiracy, a United Nations plot to poison our water supply, and a government cover-up of contact with extraterrestrial life, then you'll love *Lucky Bastard*.

How close do Jack and Morgan come to Bill and Hillary? About as close as the last asteroid came to Earth. Jack Adams's zipless encounters—so frequently aided by Vaseline that the reader begins to wonder whether a product-placement fee was paid—reflect a use 'em and throw 'em away attitude that's more typical of Kennedy than Clinton. Jack Adams doesn't care if he is loved; all he wants is sex. It seems more likely that Clinton wants sex in order to feel loved. Part-Kennedy and part-Clinton, McCarry's Adams is a halfway house for conservatives who can't quite decide which one they hate more. Morgan runs her husband's life like a dictatoress, controlling the spigot of Communist money he needs to fuel his ambitions. Driven by a true belief in the revolution, she comes across more as Madame Mao than as Madame Clinton.

On its own terms, *Lucky Bastard* is a good read with lively sex, vivid if inaccurate character sketches, and a twisting plot. But one cannot escape the sense that McCarry wants it to be taken more seriously. His portrayal of Russian Communists bemoaning the collapse of their cause unwittingly strikes close to home: The reader surmises that McCarry himself longs for the good old days of cloak and dagger. Don't be surprised if you see him at the Russian Tea Room in New York, swapping tales with a former KGB adversary. McCarry seems to use writing as vent for his nostalgia and his political fantasy about the Clintons as a way of establishing his relevance, even if only to fiction.

But don't let reality deter you. If you want to get lost in a whopper of a political tale and harmlessly indulge your deepest paranoia, read this book. Buying *Lucky Bastard* is really a less pernicious way of acting on a hatred of the Clintons than other things one might do. ♦

Dick Morris, a political columnist, was President Clinton's chief political advisor in 1995 and '96.

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FINNEGAN'S SLEEP

Refusing to Learn About Poverty

By Noemie Emery

Just when you think the Left may have learned something—how to think, how to see, how to gain from experience—along comes a book like William Finnegan's *Cold New World* to show how wrong you can be. A prime example of the feeling-good-about-feeling-bad book, *Cold New World* is a long, messy wallow in liberal guilt that condescends to and exploits its unhappy subjects, assigns the wrong cause to their terrible problems, and demands in their name a covey of useless solutions.

William Finnegan
Cold New World
Growing Up in a Harder Country
Random House, 432 pp., $26

In Finnegan's cliché-ridden world, the rich—backed by callous conservatives (a redundancy: all conservatives are callous)—make vicious war on the young and needy, cruelly depriving them of schools, jobs, wages, and hope. It is truly a cold world, for the life of the poor is harsh and unforgiving. It is also a new world, for this harshness is novel, peculiar to our own especially vicious epoch: Never have things been so hard for so many; never have class lines been so rigid; never has a system been so heartless; never have the lives of the young been so bleak. And seldom has a book been so wrong—so willfully determined not to learn from history.

The thesis of *Cold New World* is that many young Americans are caught in an economic "downdrift," falling from the middle to the lower class because of state-sanctioned decline and stagnation. But Finnegan's four heart-rending examples all turn out to have belonged to the underclass from the beginning: a young black man born to a drug-addicted, teenage, single mother in the slums of New Haven; addled white skinheads in the slums of Los Angeles; immigrant farm-workers in Washington state; and a black family in a small, east Texas town bypassed by the civil-rights movement. These are not people falling; they had nothing to fall from. They are people failing to rise.

Finnegan presents them as victims of economic stagnation, but what soon becomes evident is that their real problem is isolation from the surrounding middle class. Through no fault of their own, they have been reared as social illiterates—with no knowledge of culture, no sense of religion or moral community, no sense of direction and purpose. They are not without brains and ambition, but they have never been given the habits of mind needed to use them. They are deprived—not so much in the sense that they have little now, but in the sense that they lack what they need to get more later. They break appointments, drop plans in mid-sequence, and spend what money they get largely on gimmicks and toys.

This is where the economic solutions proposed in *Cold New World* break down: Even if well-paying jobs existed in the numbers that Finnegan wants, it is not certain that the poor would be able to hold them or use them as stepping-stones to better things. Trying to make the liberal case, Finnegan doesn't realize how much more strongly he makes the conservative case: Intangibles do matter.

But even the facts from which Finnegan starts aren't quite right. In fact, his facts aren't quite present. He insists that we face hard times. "Real hourly wages have fallen significantly over the past twenty-four years," he declares, without citing any figures. "The median household income has fallen, and the national poverty rate has risen," he adds, again without figures. "The malaise that afflicted so many of these kids," he writes of his young subjects, "is more general than some indices might suggest." But how does he know? In place of citations, the reader gets would-be Dickensian descriptions of a "darkening, fearsome world" where "nearly everyone . . . feels these downdrifts . . . [and] fears their fetid, chilly breath."

His assertions seem based (though he doesn't say) on data from the Employer Survey that indicate hourly wages paid non-supervisor production workers have suffered a comparative decline. What he ignores is evidence that though there are fewer well-paying jobs for unskilled workers, there are proportionally fewer unskilled workers to fill them. If the discrepancy in wages has grown, it is due to huge increases at the higher end. Finnegan claims that recent trends have "left thirty percent of the country's workers earning too little to lift a family [of four] out of poverty." But he doesn't mention that many people earning these lower wages—students, teenagers, people working part-time, and young people in entry-level positions—do not have families of four to support.

In a monograph soon to appear from the American Enterprise Institute, Marvin Kosters argues that the Employer Survey is skewed to count only the lowest-paid workers and records only hourly wages—not non-wage benefits (like pensions and health insurance) or irregular pay-

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ments (like bonuses and profit-sharing). Kosters concludes:

> Average hourly earnings of production and nonsupervisory workers is seriously misleading. . . . [R]eal wages have declined for some demographic groups. However, the average worker's total pay has increased by about fifteen percent since 1973, after adjustment for inflation. . . . If the methodology now being used to measure price increases is used to adjust for inflation, workers' average pay has increased by at least ten percentage points more.

This picture—of general prosperity, with some small but real pockets of poverty—is far more consistent with the empirical evidence of low unemployment, high consumer confidence, and growing home ownership than is Finnegan's view of a great mass of misery beneath a thin upper crust. Neither do the facts support his picture of youthful malaise. "A new study by the National Bureau of Economic Research finds that young people are getting happier," writes James Glassman in the *Washington Post*. "The real story about kids is the opposite of the chaos and anguish painted in the press."

Finnegan not only misstates the extent of America's ills; he assigns them the wrong causes. "For what it's worth," he says, "I blame the government"—and the selfish middle class: "Having reaped the benefits of all this public investment"—the New Deal, public schools, public works, the GI Bill, etc.—"my generation (and our parents') decided at some point that taxes on our hard-earned incomes had become an undue burden, were almost un-American, and a Reagan-like amnesia became convenient to all the tax-cutting. Thus, over the next generation, government had largely withdrawn support for education, poor children, public works."

But what does "withdrawn support" mean? Government still spends massively—if not effectively—on education, police, and welfare. It was exploding tax rates coupled with imploding results—bad schools, high crime, deteriorating services—that kicked off the tax-cutting fevers of the 1980s, not eruptions of greed. Finnegan blames the middle class for deserting the cities when they started to crumble—seeming to think it had a civic duty to stay and suffer. People in the middle class would point to the chaos wrought by earlier incarnations of Finnegan's theories and claim they had no choice.

Finnegan rightly laments the frightening growth in childhood poverty—a harrowing rise of thirty-seven percent, between 1970 and 1995. He blames this, of course, on "political neglect of children, particularly poor children, . . . as taxpayers increasingly shirk traditional obligations to the young."

FINNEGAN'S *COLD NEW WORLD* IS AN EXTENDED EXERCISE IN MISTAKING EFFECTS FOR CAUSES.

What he does not connect poverty to is what everyone else sees as the driving force of most social pathology: the rate of out-of-wedlock births. Nearly everything that is cold and new for children in our world is linked to this critical factor. "Children born out of wedlock to never-married women are poor 50 percent of the time," observes a lengthy report prepared by the Heritage Foundation. "By contrast, children born within a marriage that remains intact are poor 7 percent of the time." Not all the people of whom Finnegan writes are directly touched by out-of-wedlock birth, but there is not a social pathology for which he blames other causes that does not bear some relation to this cause. Not to name it in his orgy of blaming is an act of either stupidity or evasion.

Finnegan's view of the cures for child poverty are as old-fashioned as his view of its causes. He demands nothing that has not been attempted many times before—and failed every time: more regulation, more taxes, more old-style welfare, more forced school busing, and much, much more money for public schools. Of course, experience shows that money isn't always the answer—especially in the schools. In one notorious case, Kansas City spent $1.8 billion on target schools, only to see reading levels stagnate and the gap between black and white students widen. Meanwhile, private and church-run schools continue to achieve success with much less money.

When not demanding that we pour money down various rat holes, Finnegan proposes to revive civic life with compassionate attitudes toward crime and drugs. Though surveys show repeatedly that the poor are terrified of crime—and his own reporting shows the devastation of drugs—he finds this the one place where government has been only too active: "Everyone seemed to feel the state, particularly the police and the courts, crouching hungrily at the edge of their lives." The result is a "grotesque orgy of imprisonment . . . driven primarily by the politically irresistible, utterly ineffective 'War on Drugs.'" The law is the ultimate enemy: "We jail the poor in their multitudes, abandon the dream of equality, cede more and more of public life to private interests . . . [while] those who can afford [it] lock themselves inside gated communities and send their children to private schools."

But it was, of course, the bad public schools, drugs, and crime that created the gated communities and private schools Finnegan deplores. *Cold New World* is an extended exercise in mistaking effects for causes.

Pervasive in Finnegan's work is his conviction that absolute equality is something the state can and ought

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to provide. He has learned nothing from decades of experience in the Soviet bloc, Western Europe, Israel, and the United States: The harder the state tries to mandate equality, the more wretched life for its people becomes. Every effort ever tried to overstep certain limits of activism has failed—and created a truly cold, new world in its wake.

The lesson most Americans seem to have grasped from all this is that while the state can do some things—insure against natural disasters, for example, and sweep away artificial barriers such as race bias—further efforts bring a train of troubles. Nearly two years ago, the *New York Times* ran an essay by William Julius Wilson that made an argument much like Finnegan's: The absence of well-paying jobs in the inner cities is what led to decay, and the state has a duty to create jobs there and force businesses back. A flood of mail immediately came in from readers insisting that Wilson had it backwards: Business was driven out by taxes, regulations, and crime, and cities had an obligation to become business-friendly before they tried to get business back. When such a response comes from a basically liberal readership, the mandated-equality party truly is over—everywhere except in the pages of *Cold New World*.

One suspects that the main purpose of William Finnegan's book was to make William Finnegan feel good. Good in the first place because he is so much better than we are: He bleeds for these people. And good in the second place because he never forgets how much better he is than the people he writes about—a creature from a world beyond their dreams. This attitude, which used to get missionaries sautéed and devoured, has gotten Finnegan considerable flattery instead. "He has staked out as his beat the disenfranchised—the sort of people most educated, privileged, white people have no contact with and could care less about," runs one blurb on the dust jacket. He "opens doors that most writers would be reluctant even to approach," adds another. There you have it: He cares; no one else does.

But people who actually care tend to think about others and the effects of their words upon them. They tend to notice when events disprove theories and when the advice they are giving turns bad. Finnegan goes on as though Lyndon Johnson had just proposed the Great Society, as though it were 1964 and all things still seemed possible, as though government were the answer to every problem and poverty could be cured by the stroke of a pen. The last thirty years have bypassed the author, who hasn't noticed that the things he wants brought our great cities near to death, while the things he hates have recently been bringing them back.

When does a point of view become self-indulgence, even a matter of preening? One leaves this book with a feeling of anguish, not just at the chaotic lives of its unhappy subjects, but at the fixed state of its author's mentality. This is a book you will cherish—if you think that the Great Society was not great enough, that the administration of New York's John Lindsay was the high point of municipal governance, and that Franklin Roosevelt was a scrooge and Robert Kennedy a spoilsport. If, however, you are one of the four in five Americans who have learned to think differently, you will put down *Cold New World* in despair. ♦

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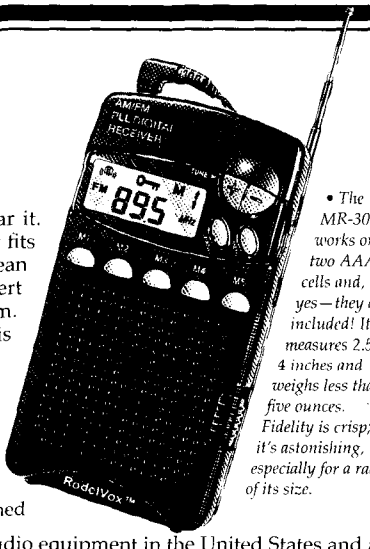

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BRAVE NEW ARCHES

McDonald's Astride the World

By Tim W. Ferguson

The average reader is likely to be put off by a book capable of suggesting that "Theorists who write about cultural imperialism argue that it is the domination of popular culture—rather than outright military or political control—that matters most in the postmodern, postsocialist, postindustrial world."

But readers should not avoid anthropologist James L. Watson's new study, *Golden Arches East: McDonald's in East Asia*, for it is, in fact, a tale of triumphal Americanism. Watson, the Fairbank professor of Chinese studies at Harvard, has assembled four Asian scholars to help him chronicle the largely benevolent influence of our premier fast-food chain on the Far East. *Golden Arches East* is an armchair reminder of how the good life is exported from the good, old United States.

It's easy to take an American phenomenon like McDonald's for granted, and we do. The chain still sells 41 percent of America's hamburgers, but U.S. per-store sales have been flat for the past few years, most attempts to introduce new products have flopped, and the last chief executive was pushed aside.

Surveys show Americans simply figure they can get a better burger elsewhere and probably for less. McDonald's is still a draw for youngsters—holding parents hostage and keeping the chain something of a meeting ground in an otherwise splintered society. But for the rest of us, there seem to be plenty of better options.

Tim W. Ferguson is assistant managing editor of Forbes *magazine.*

The McDonald's recipe, however, still works in a developing world aspiring to American values. Nowhere is that appetite stronger than in Asia, where the fast-food giant is nearing four thousand outlets: A McDonald's opens somewhere in the world every three hours. In Beijing, Seoul, Taipei, and Hong Kong, as Watson and colleagues observe, the reasons have more to do with the feeling than the fare.

James L. Watson, ed.,
Golden Arches East
McDonald's in East Asia
Stanford University Press, 256 pp., $45

John Vidal
McLibel
Burger Culture on Trial
New Press, 354 pp., $24

In the United States, we've forgotten what it was like before Ray Kroc dramatically expanded his business during the 1960s. Roadside eateries used to be a rare and untidy lot. The appeal of a dependably clean joint with predictable grub and cheerful service—and a dependably clean bathroom—accounted for many of those early "billions served."

McDonald's in Asia is that same sort of respite today. When people there "deserve a break" from hot, dirty, pricey local alternatives, they repair to the safe American icon. In particular, the Golden Arches "have become sanctuaries for women who wish to avoid male-dominated settings." The absence of alcohol helps. In some locations about 60 percent of the patrons are female. Be it as employee or customer, a woman is on something closer to an equal footing, and my own recent experiences in Tokyo indicate that the young ladies working the counter are anything but quiet and subservient.

Although the bustle for tables can be intense at peak times, McDonald's is a leisurely hangout much of the day in Asia. For studying, romancing, or chatting with friends, they are "the equivalent of youth clubs" in Hong Kong. On weekends, McDonald's can be a special meal out (taxi ride and all) for the family. A subtle attraction in the Chinese culture, at least, is that this not only affords a bargain but spares the possibility of humiliation: One need not fear loss of face from having a neighboring table order such expensive dishes as shark's fin soup.

Egalitarianism extends even further: The fact that both employees and customers are standing at the counter—and that customers must fetch their own supplies—seems to even out social inequalities. Chinese customers learned to clean up after themselves by observing what foreigners did; this is now considered "civilized." Also, spitting near the premises is frowned upon.

The ready-made smile from the help—an "indiscriminate display of goodwill toward perfect strangers"—is apparently a selling point in poker-faced cultures such as China, although it took some getting used to. At first blush the patrons thought they were being laughed at. Sometimes, as in China, McDonald's had to teach the population not only new foods, but new terms: "waste" and "drive-through," for example. Cheese also is a recent encounter for many; some parents now believe it is what "makes Americans so physically strong and energetic."

McDonald's has created conventions. Queuing is not first nature to Chinese; Hong Kongers preferred a scrum at the counter when McDonald's opened there in 1975. The celebration of children's birthdays, one of Watson's essayists notes, was "un-

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known in most parts of East Asia" before Ronald McDonald made it a special event. As in the United States, kids are the key to McDonald's marketing. In Hong Kong, *Golden Arches East* observes, "children rarely ate outside their home until the late 1970s, and when they did, they were expected to eat what was put in front of them. The idea that children might actually order their own food or speak to a waiter would have outraged most adults." Nowadays, many Chinese parents want offspring to pick from a Western menu so they will grow up to be successful and know "how to enjoy a modern way of life."

Not everything is an easy sell. To the hygienic Japanese, touching food is still mostly forbidden: The hamburger, if eaten at all, is usually held partially within its wrapper. Standing while eating—McDonald's helped introduce countertop consumption in Japan—violated basic etiquette.

Korea, meanwhile, presented special challenges. Even before hard times hit last year, it was resistant to Western commercial invasions and stubborn about its ways. Paying in advance for food is a stretch there, especially for men used to taking the check at the end of a meal. Dining solo, which is inherent to fast food, "generates feelings of loneliness and self-pity." Sharing items is the norm, and Koreans in a group at McDonald's still pour their fries from the individual pouches into a heap.

All in all, *Golden Arches East* is a fun read and travel guide rolled into one. Only in the closing essay does the reader run up against the academic babble of "homologous social reactions." But by then the message is unmaskable: This form of cultural imperialism is contagious, consumable, and incurable.

Of course, in the hostile quarters of the self-loathing West, the growth of McDonald's is not an opening but a plague, and the other new McDonald's book, *McLibel: Burger Culture on Trial*, is a bite of that. A cover blurb from Ralph Nader gives fair warning of what's coming: "A tumultuously exciting story of corporate litigation against citizen's free speech that continues to boomerang around the world."

Ric Ergenbright / Corbis

Written by John Vidal from the Manchester *Guardian*, the book recounts the company's eight-year legal pursuit of a pair of London Greenpeace activists who accused McDonald's of nearly everything but high treason. The resulting 313 days of trial—the longest in the history of English case law—ended in 1996 in a public-relations fiasco for the burger chain. It won nominal libel judgments against the pair—anarchists David Morris and Helen Steel—but the judge found substance in their contentions that McDonald's targeted children in advertising, allowed chickens to be cruelly slaughtered for McNuggets, and drove down wages in the catering industry in Britain. (He did not accept the claim that Ronald McDonald was destroying the rain forest to raise cattle or murdering people by inducing them to eat unhealthy food.) McDonald's opted not to try to collect damages or court costs (which one tabloid put at ten million pounds) from the two paupers.

The great mystery is why the case was mounted in the first place. All it did was give new life around the world to outlandish charges by shabby street picketers. Vidal's wandering text doesn't have much of an answer, except perhaps the implication that McDonald's rigid culture—in which, according to one estimate, 10 percent of Americans find their first jobs—breeds paranoia.

The company's frightened polishing of its image and its business blundering are on regular display in the excellent beat reporting of the *Wall Street Journal*'s Richard Gibson. McDonald's hamhanded approach to the wave of bad press in recent years about its sales performance in the U.S. offers much better evidence of the company's reactive hostility than the tour de farce Vidal serves up in *McLibel: Burger Culture on Trial*.

But for the anarchists Morris and Steel and their chronicler Vidal, it only begins with burgers: As a late chapter in the book puts it, "It's Not Just McDonald's." No, the enemy is the whole American commercial culture—precisely, you'll recall, what attracts all those ordinary Asians to the Golden Arches. ♦

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Forty Beanie Babies purchased by U.S. trade representative Charlene Barshefsky while accompanying President Clinton on his recent trip to China are being held by the U.S. Customs Service on the grounds that they were improperly imported into the United States. —*News item*

Parody

Beaniegate
The Scandal So Far

July 8. U.S. trade representative Charlene Barshefsky sneaks away from delegation during Clinton China trip to purchase 40 Beanie Babies.

July 8. Suzie Barshefsky, aged 7, places a tearful call to New York literary agent Andrew Wylie. "She promised to buy me Batty, Sly, and Bongo. All she got me was stuff like Hoppity, Quackers, and Squeeler. I already have two Hoppities," Suzie weeps. "It's bad enough I have to hear her talk about trade policy over breakfast." Wylie counsels Suzie to begin taping her mother's bedtime stories and other comments. "I know she's my mother, but I've seen the White House oppo team in action," Suzie later explains to Larry King.

July 10. Drudge reports food fights at *Newsweek* cafeteria over whether to publish initial Beaniegate story. Michael Isikoff is hired as on-air commentator by Nickelodeon.

July 11. Charlene Barshefsky turns over 40 Beanie Babies to U.S. Customs Service. Ken Starr broadens his investigation, and hires 600 new lawyers. Vows to issue report on Beaniegate on June 13, 2037, or when he finds out what a Beanie Baby is, whichever is later.

July 13. Bombshell report by Bill Gertz in *Washington Times*. Claims Barshefsky was carrying secret Beanie Baby Technology with her to China. Before Barshefsky visit, only 27 percent of Chinese Beanie Babies were cute. After visit, 95 percent of new Beanie Babies are cute.

Bessie

July 14. Barshefsky appears at White House press conference flanked by Bruce Lindsey and Rahm Emanuel. "Listen to me, I never had any relationship with those Beanie Babies," she declares, wagging finger. White House dispatches private detective Jack Palladino to China to intimidate 1 billion potential witnesses, squelching so-called Beanie Eruptions.

July 16. Suzie Barshefsky releases talking points she says her mother gave her. "The president is going to claim you already have too many Beanie Babies. You don't want to contradict him, do you?"

July 17. Betty Currie testifies that Barshefsky secretly returned 43 Beanie Babies, kept in a box in the documents room. At public event, Secret Service agent reaches for cell phone. A Beanie Baby falls out of his pocket. Supreme Court clerks forced to cancel their vacation plans. Boyden Gray sniffs on *Crossfire*, "In the Bush White House, we restricted ourselves to Cabbage Patch Kids."

July 20. Barshefsky approval ratings hit record high for trade rep. (name recognition up to 0.06 percent). Suzie Barshefsky poses for photos in *Highlights*. Rep. Bob Barr calls for removal of all toys from U.S. territory. Newt Gingrich quashes congressional investigation amidst rumors that he has his own Beanie problem.

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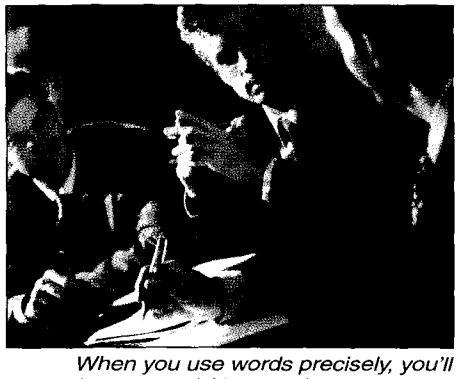

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